Shojo Beat Manga

BLANK SLATE

1

Story & Art by

Aya Kanno

Shojo Beat

BLANK SLATE

What does it take to find your true inner self? Zen's memory has been wiped, and he can't remember if he's a killer or a hero. And a lot of people will do anything they can to keep it that way.

QUESTIONS

Zen's unearthly charm attracts a veritable rogues gallery. A bounty hunter becomes obsessed enough to become his new partner, while the daughter of a general treats him like some sort of guru. But when he meets a mysterious doctor who may know him from the past, Zen learns that the secret of his lost memory is definitely more sinister than saintly.

Search Your Soul... or Die Trying!

Story & Art by
Aya Kanno

1

www.shojobeat.com

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This book reads from right to left.

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RATED T+ FOR OLDER TEEN
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UNLESS YOU WANT TO DIE.

KSH
AK

Shojo Beat

BLANK SLATE

Vol. 1

Story & Art by Aya Kanno

Vol. 1

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第1話
Chapter One
BLANK SLATE
悪咲
アクサガ

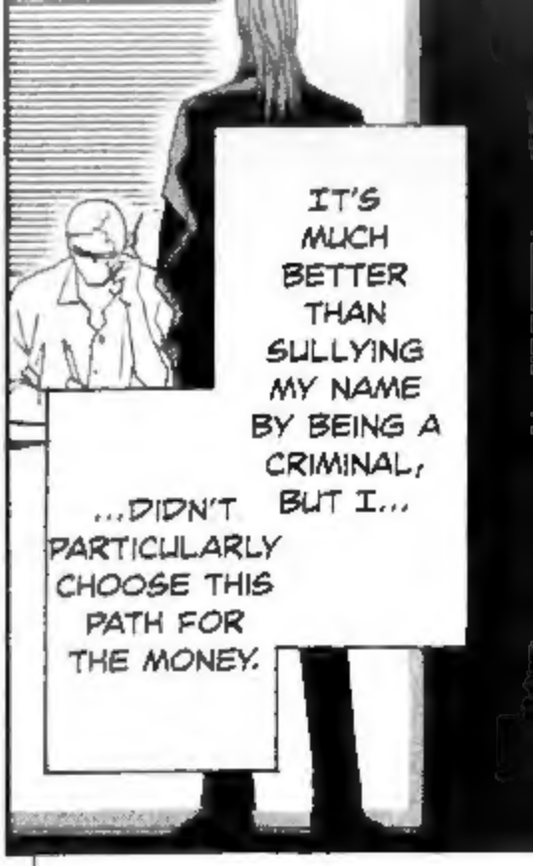
Another time, another world...

The story of a man...

...IT IS ILLEGAL TO SEE THE FUTURE. I CONDUCT MY BUSINESS IN THE SHADOWS ...
EVER SINCE GALAY INVADED AMATA ...
MY FORTUNE CAN WAIT.
Now, which one was it?
...
I READ TAROT CARDS, PASSED DOWN IN THIS COUNTRY OF AMATA SINCE LONG AGO. THESE CARDS NEVER MISS.

MY NAME IS RUSSO.
WILL YOU LISTEN TO MY STORY?
...
...DO BUSINESS WITH LOW-LIFES LIKE YOU. IT'S DEMEANING TO ONE SUCH AS I.
I CAN ONLY...
AMONG MY OWN PEOPLE, I'M SOMEWHAT WELL KNOWN... AS A BOUNTY HUNTER.
HERE, A BOUNTY HUNTER IS NEVER OUT OF WORK.
THE GALAY GOVERNMENT, WHICH HONORS JUSTICE AND ORDER, IS TRYING TO WIPE OUT EVIL.
IT PUT A REWARD ON THE HEADS OF ALL KINDS OF CRIMINALS.
WANTED
WANTED
WANTED

YEAH... WE FINALLY FOUND HIM.
IT SEEMS LIKE NO ONE HAS NOTICED BECAUSE ALMOST NO ONE KNOWS WHAT HE LOOKS LIKE.
IN THIS TOWN?
ARE YOU SURE?


IT'S MUCH BETTER THAN SULLYING MY NAME BY BEING A CRIMINAL, BUT I...
...DIDN'T PARTICULARLY CHOOSE THIS PATH FOR THE MONEY.

WANTED

MORE CRIMES THAN EVEN THE GOVERNMENT KNOWS.
MURDER, ROBBERY, ASSAULT AND BATTERY... HE'S COMMITTED EVERY CRIME IMAGINABLE.
HE'LL BE MY BIGGEST HIT SO FAR.

HE'S KNOWN AS ZEN...
DEAD OR ALIVE. HE'S AN ULTRA A-CLASS TARGET.

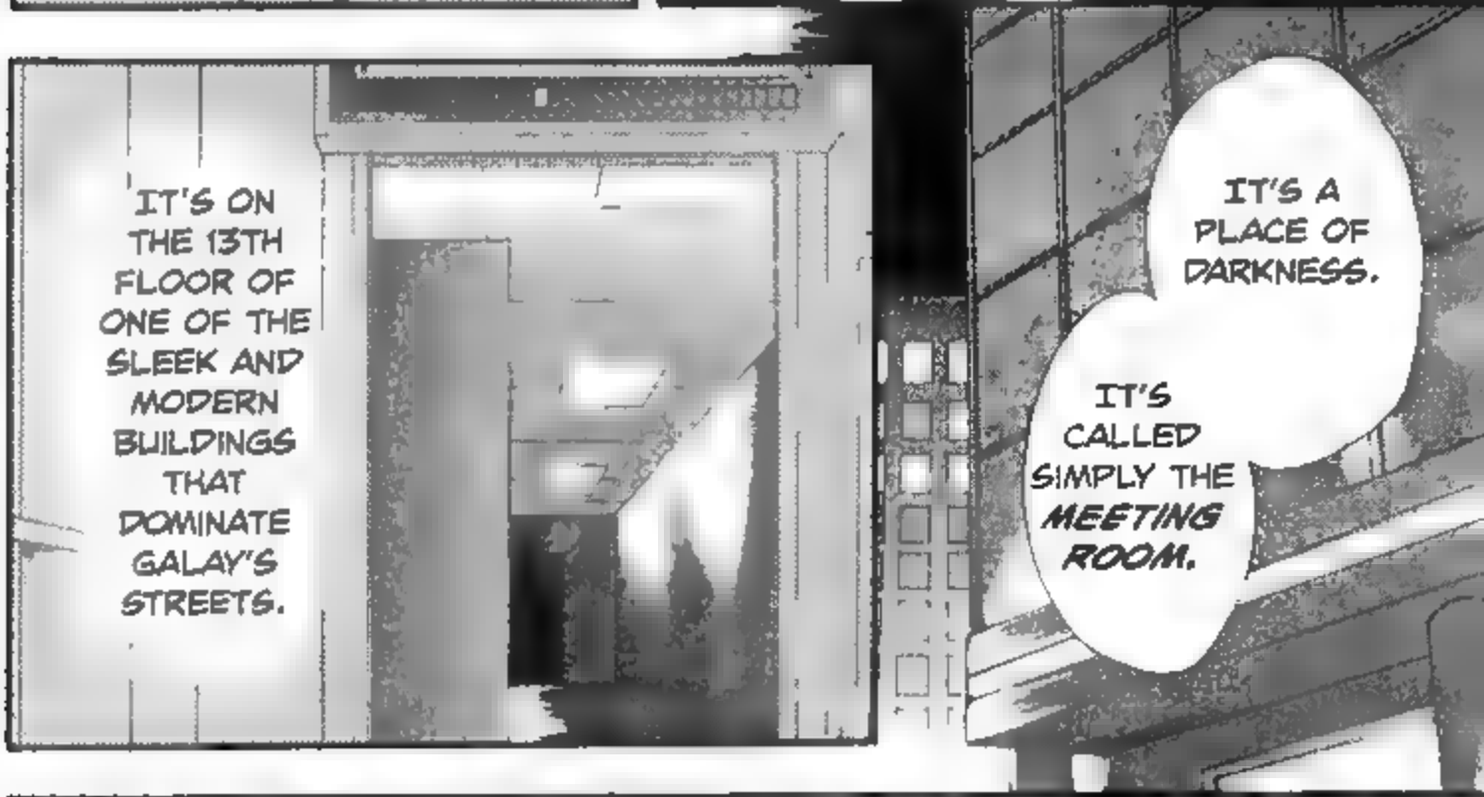
EVER SINCE HE ALMOST KILLED ME YEARS AGO I'VE NEVER FORGOTTEN.
THOSE DARK DEMONIC EYES...

I'LL PUT A STOP TO HIM.
KILLING HIM WILL BE WORTH-WHILE...

A PERSON HASN'T LIVED UNTIL THEY'VE *CONTROLLED* SOMEONE ELSE'S FATE... YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
THAT'S WHY I NEED TO *CONTROL* HIM.
I'VE HEARD THAT YOU'RE SKILLED...
...BUT ZEN'S NOT YOUR AVERAGE THUG.

THAT'S WHY BEING A BOUNTY HUNTER WHO CAN BUMP PEOPLE OFF LEGALLY...
IF YOU STEAL SOMEONE'S LIFE, THAT PERSON'S CONSCIOUSNESS AND FUTURE...
YOU STEAL IT ALL.
...
THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF CONTROL IS DEALING DEATH.
I...
...SEEK ABSOLUTE *CONTROL.*

MEETING ROOM?
AT THE MOMENT HE'S...
...ROOSTING IN THE MEETING ROOM OF THE E-HILL BUILDING ON THE 13TH FLOOR.
...IS THE BEST WORK FOR SOMEONE LIKE ME- SOMEONE WHO LIKES TO KILL.


IT'S ON THE 13TH FLOOR OF ONE OF THE SLEEK AND MODERN BUILDINGS THAT DOMINATE GALAY'S STREETS.
IT'S A PLACE OF DARKNESS.
IT'S CALLED SIMPLY THE MEETING ROOM.

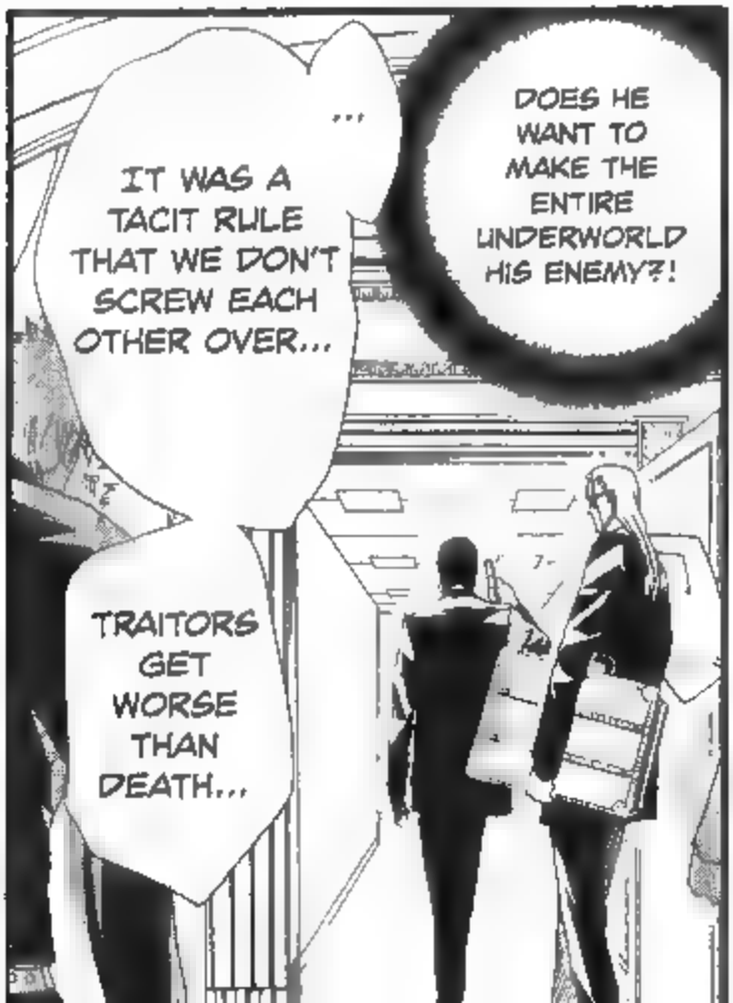
...IS A HANGOUT FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT FUNCTION UNDER THE COUNTRY'S NEW LAWS.
THIS ROOM, DELUGED WITH WHAT THE GALAY GOVERNMENT HAS BANNED- DRUGS, PROSTITUTION, SEXUAL DEVIANCE...

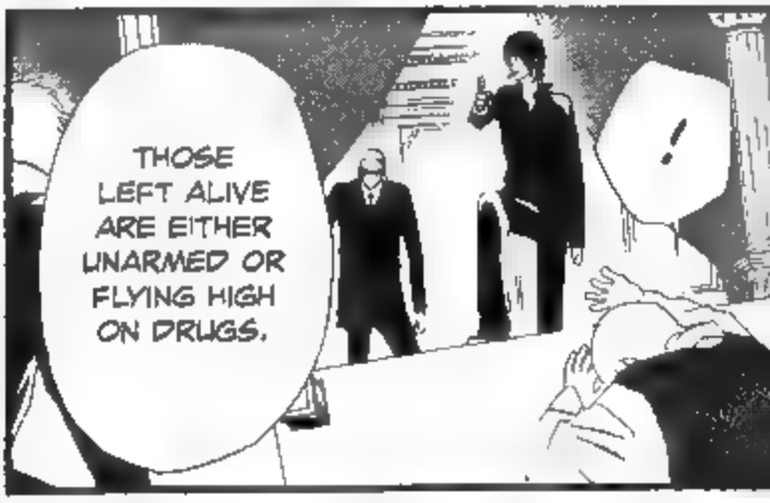
A YOUNG GIRL? OR...
NO, A MAN.
BLACK HAIR AND DARK EYES... BUT NOT DARK-SKINNED (OR SO I HEARD)...
...WHAT IS YOUR DESIRE?
SIR...
IT'S THE PERFECT PLACE TO HIDE.
HE DOESN'T OBEY OR LISTEN, AND ONLY CERTAIN CUSTOMERS LIKE HIM, BUT...
THOSE WHO ARE ATTRACTED... WOMEN... MEN... THEY ARE INSTANTLY INFATUATED.
AGH!
WAIT! I'M NOT LOOKING FOR A WHORE...
OH, YOU'RE *THAT* TYPE, HUH?
IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT, WE JUST GOT IN A GOOD ONE.
ZEN!

YOU'RE MY PLAYMATE TODAY?
...SINCE HE SO OPENLY REVEALS HIS NAME AND IS A PROSTITUTE.
...THEN CERTAINLY NO ONE WOULD THINK IT...
IF HE IS THE REAL THING...
THIS IS HIM?
THIS GUY, AS SLENDER AS A WOMAN, WITH DELICATE FEATURES TO MATCH IS THE ZEN?
YOU...
WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?
BUT STILL...

EVEN IF THIS GUY IS THE REAL ZEN, THERE'S NO WAY I CAN KILL HIM *HERE*.
...
I'M NOT WORKING PER SE.
PEOPLE JUST COME AS THEY PLEASE, AND IF THEY CATCH MY INTEREST I FOOL AROUND WITH 'EM.
FIRST I NEED TO GET CLOSE TO THE TARGET AND GET HIM TO LET DOWN HIS GUARD.
BECAUSE EVEN THE UNDERWORLD HAS RULES.
...GETS OLD TOO.
...IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE THIS PLACE...
A GUN...
BUT...
?!
THIS MAN IS WITHOUT A DOUBT...
JOIN ME.

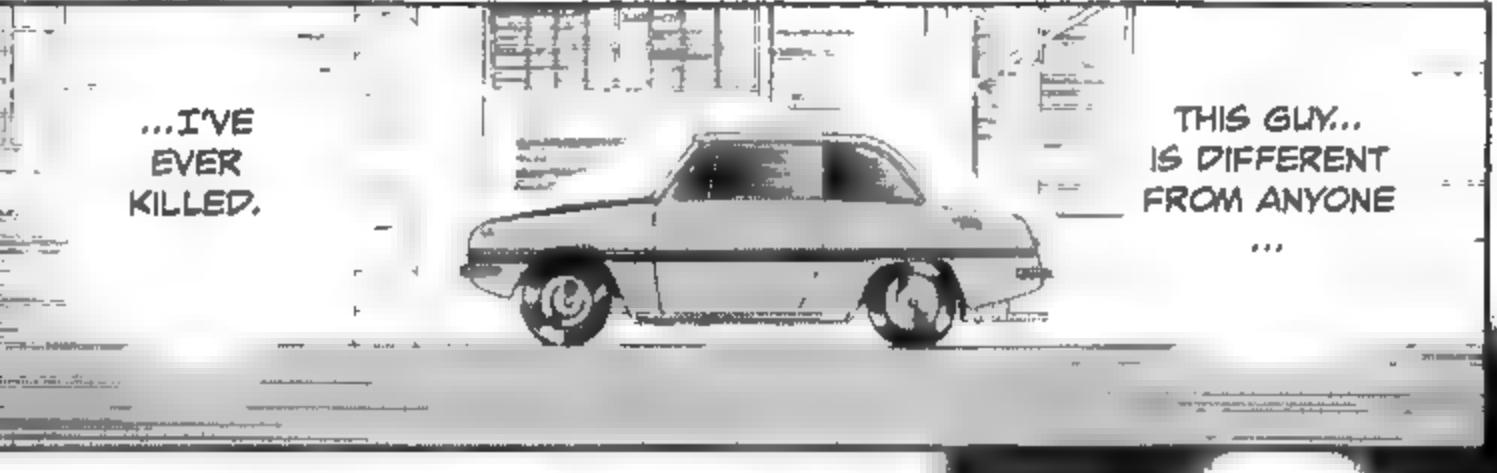
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
...AN ULTRA A-CLASS VILLAIN.
KSSSH
THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE IN TOWN WHERE PEOPLE LIKE US!
GYAAH!
!!
KRASSH


...
IT WAS A TACIT RULE THAT WE DON'T SCREW EACH OTHER OVER...
DOES HE WANT TO MAKE THE ENTIRE UNDERWORLD HIS ENEMY?!
TRAITORS GET WORSE THAN DEATH...


THOSE LEFT ALIVE ARE EITHER UNARMED OR FLYING HIGH ON DRUGS.
!

SINGLE-HANDEDLY. . . HE...
RUSSO, COLLECT MONEY AND CAR KEYS FROM THEM.

ZEN...
WHAT DO I CARE?
BL
AM
!!


...I'VE EVER KILLED.
THIS GUY... IS DIFFERENT FROM ANYONE ...

FOR A LITTLE LONGER ...
ZEN... WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW?
WHY AM I CARRYING THE LUGGAGE?
IT'S... PROBABLY NOT A GOOD IDEA TO KEEP USING THE SAME CAR...
IF I COULD CONTROL THIS GUY'S FATE, IT WOULD BE...

...I WANNA SLEEP IN A DECENT BED.
...
FOR NOW...
IF YOU NEED A PURPOSE OR REASON...
IN ORDER TO CARRY OUT MY WORK.
...I'LL GO ALONG WITH HIM AND GAIN HIS TRUST.
IF I LIKE IT, FINE. I ONLY DO WHAT I WANT.
...THEN YOU COME UP WITH ONE.

1

It s nice to meet you...

Or. hello.

This is Aya Kanno.

First of all, I need to apologize for something. Those of you who read *Blank Slate* when it was running in the magazine may have already noticed, but the Chapter 1 from that time has not been included in this graphic novel. Instead, Chapter 4 of the bonus episodes has been included as Chapter 1. This isn't a mistake, it was something I wanted. I'm terribly sorry to those of you who read the magazine, but I hope you will understand. I'll talk about why I did this in the next sidebar

...
NOW WE WON'T HAVE ANY MONEY.
IF OUR MONEY RUNS OUT, WE'LL STEAL SOME MORE.
THERE'S NO NEED TO GET A ROOM IN A FIVE-STAR HOTEL JUST TO SLEEP...

HE'S COMPLETELY ERRATIC.
UNPREDICT-ABLE...
YOUR GUN'S HERE.
ZEN... THAT GUY...

PROOF OF HIS TRUST?
...IS SO ATTRACTIVE.
A WARNING?
CONFIDENCE
FLIP
I'LL GIVE IT BACK.
HEY...
ZEN... AN ARMY INSPECTION.
LOOKS LIKE IT.
WHICHEVER IT IS...
UH... YOU.
THERE'VE BEEN REPORTS OF PEOPLE SEEING A WANTED CRIMINAL AROUND HERE.
!

DON'T GET IN MY WAY...
KSHAK
!
YOU?! IT CAN'T BE!
SO YOU GUYS FOUND OUT ABOUT IT. WELL, THE MEETING ROOM HAS BEEN COMPLETELY DESTROYED.
OH YEAH?
AND IT SEEMS HE WAS INVOLVED IN THE ROBBERY AND MURDER THAT HAPPENED IN CITY 6.
UNLESS YOU WANT TO DIE.
... HOPE ...
EXALTATION
RUSSO...
...COVER MY BACK.
FEAR ...
...ANXIETY... DISMAY...
BLAM BLAM BL

IF I'M ASKED LATER ABOUT MY CRIMES, I CAN SAY ZEN THREATENED ME...
I MISSED THEIR VITAL POINTS.
ZEN...
BLAM BLAM
...TASTING SOMETHING NEW WITHIN ME FOR THE FIRST TIME.
BLAM
...THE JOY OF GETTING WHAT I CRAVE...
BLAM
RUSSO.
LET'S GO.
EVERY-THING THAT MAN IS GIVING ME...
I'M BEING STUPID...
IT WOULD BE A DRAG IF THEY LEARNED WHAT I LOOK LIKE.
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
WHAT AM I...
...

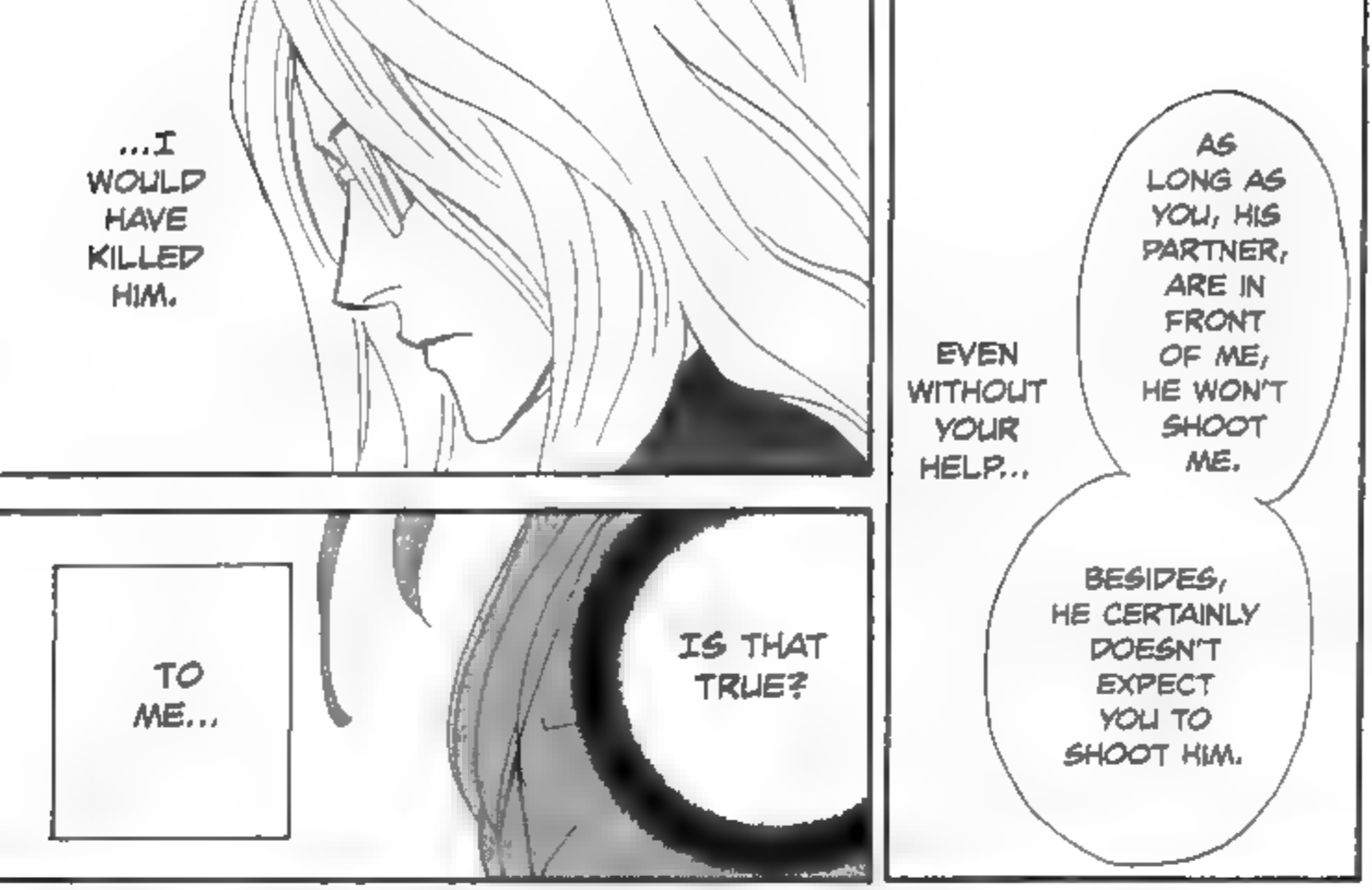
I WILL CONTROL HIM COMPLETELY.
EVERYTHING IS A MEANS TO THAT END... THAT IS MY HOPE.
I DIDN'T COME HERE TO WALK ALONGSIDE HIM.
I'M...
...A BOUNTY HUNTER.
DOWN A ROAD OF IDLE DESTRUCTION AND RUIN.
THERE'S NO PLACE TO GO.
WE JUST GO.
HE'S MY TARGET.
I'LL STEAL HIS LIFE.

...THERE WERE MANY.
WE SHOULDN'T GO INTO THE URBAN DISTRICT.
I'M TIRED OF THE SUBURBS. KEEP GOING STRAIGHT.
THE PRICE ON YOUR HEAD IS RAPIDLY GOING UP.
AS FOR CHANCES TO KILL HIM...
I'M GOING TO KILL YOU.
I KNOW A GOOD PLACE.
YOUR HEAD IS MINE.
BESIDES THE ARMY AND THE POLICE, THERE ARE SO MANY BOUNTY HUNTERS IN THE URBAN DISTRICT- IT SUCKS.
IT'S TOO DANGER-OUS.
NOW I COULD NEVER STAND FOR SOMEONE ELSE KILLING HIM.
I WILL...
AN INFORMANT I KNOW TOLD ME ABOUT IT. IF I REMEMBER CORRECTLY, IT'S AROUND HERE.
THE LAST REMAINING FORTUNE-TELLERS LIVE AND DO THEIR BUSINESS HERE.
WILL I...?

HE STARTED THINKING OF ME AS A COMPANION LONG AGO.
ARE YOU A CUSTOMER?
...KILL ZEN...
DON'T MOVE.
I CAN DO IT.
HE'S SURE TO HAVE COMPLETELY LET HIS GUARD DOWN.
THAT'S RIGHT.
NOW!
KSHAK
DO EXACTLY AS I SAY.

IF YOU VALUE YOUR PARTNER'S LIFE...
...THROW DOWN YOUR GUN!
HUH...?!
ZEN!!
THIS JERK...
!
YOU'RE THE INFORMANT ...
SHH!
I HEARD EVERYTHING FROM THE SURVIVORS OF THE MEETING ROOM.
I TOLD THEM...
IF ZEN WAS WITH YOU, I THOUGHT YOU WOULD SHOW UP HERE SOMETIME...
PRETEND LIKE YOU DON'T KNOW ME.

THAT'S RIGHT.
BUT WHAT ABOUT TOGETHER WITH AN INFAMOUS BOUNTY HUNTER?
HE'S NOT SOMEONE YOU CAN HANDLE.
...
LEAVE GETTING RID OF HIM TO ME.
I'VE GOT A GRUDGE AGAINST HIM.
...YOU'VE BEEN PRETENDING TO BE HIS ALLY, RIGHT?
TO GET HIM TO TRUST YOU...
...
RUSSO!
SHOOT.

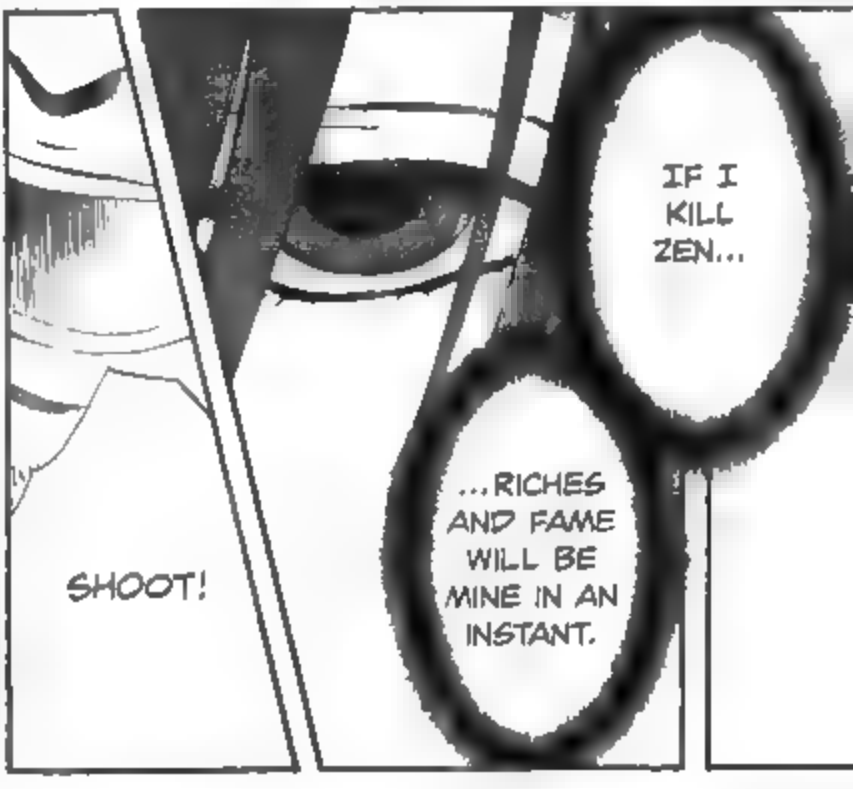

...I WOULD HAVE KILLED HIM.
EVEN WITHOUT YOUR HELP...
AS LONG AS YOU, HIS PARTNER, ARE IN FRONT OF ME, HE WON'T SHOOT ME.
BESIDES, HE CERTAINLY DOESN'T EXPECT YOU TO SHOOT HIM.
TO ME...
IS THAT TRUE?

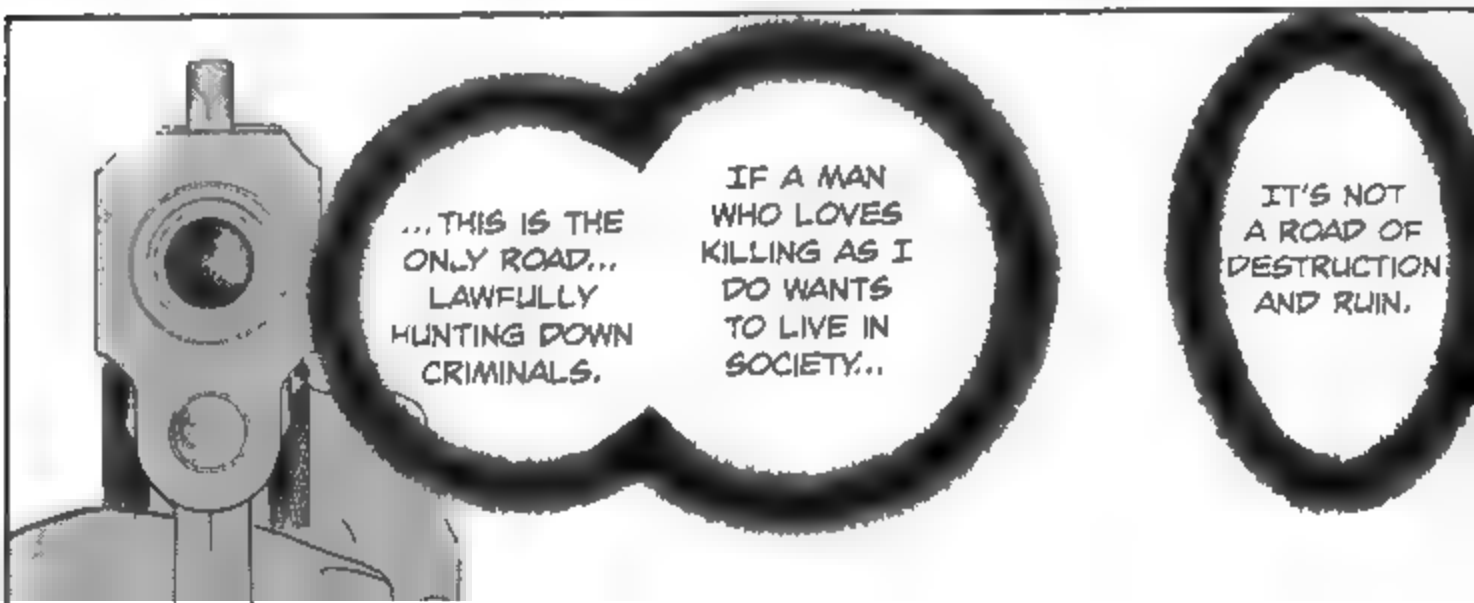
I WAS RAISED IN A WEALTHY HOUSEHOLD AND NEVER NEEDED ANYTHING...
...NEVER BEEN ANYTHING BUT TARGETS FOR CONTROL.
...OTHERS HAVE NEVER...

WHEN I WAS A KID I ENJOYED STEPPING ON ANTS.
AND I STILL FEEL THE SAME WAY.
OTHERS WERE BENEATH ME.
NOTHING BUT BORING AND WORTHLESS PEOPLE.

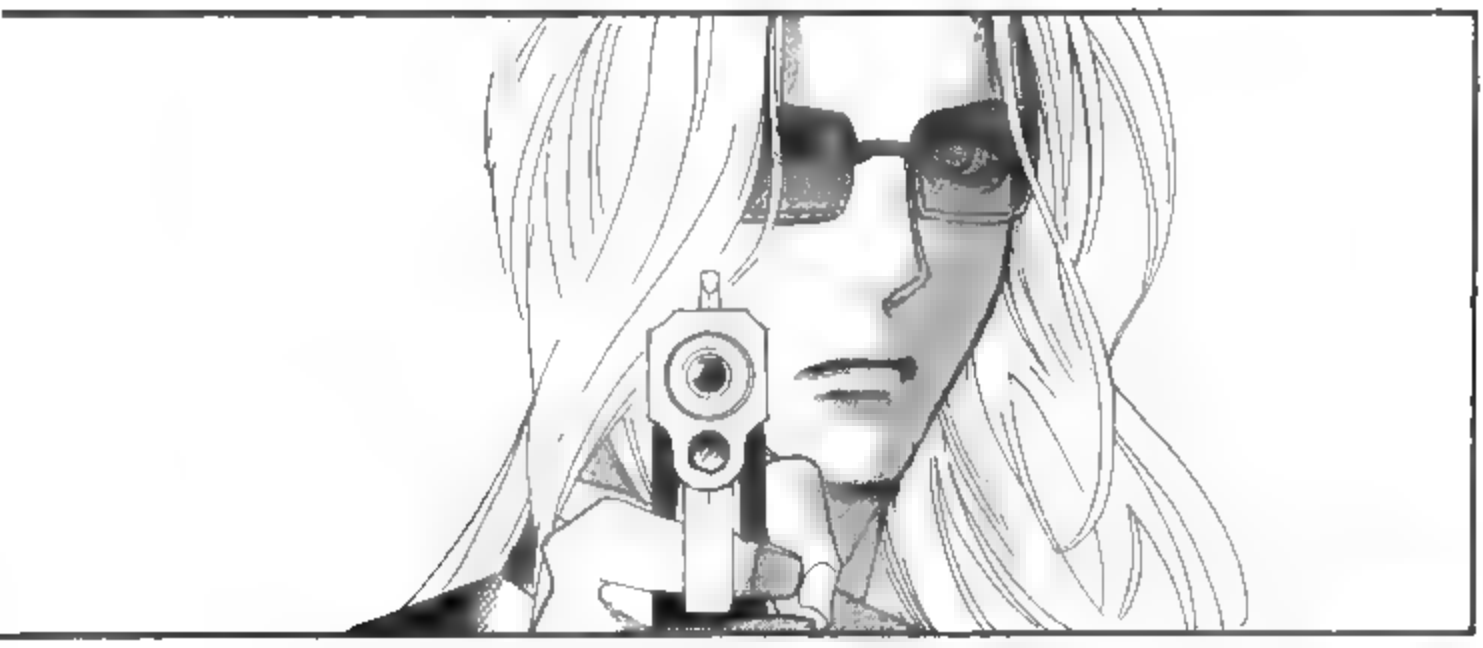
HE'S HELPLESS.
HE'S COMPLETELY DEFENSE-LESS.
LOOK.
QUICK! SHOOT!

I WOULD BE THE TOP BOUNTY HUNTER.


IF I KILL ZEN...
...RICHES AND FAME WILL BE MINE IN AN INSTANT.
SHOOT!


...THIS IS THE ONLY ROAD... LAWFULLY HUNTING DOWN CRIMINALS.
IF A MAN WHO LOVES KILLING AS I DO WANTS TO LIVE IN SOCIETY...
IT'S NOT A ROAD OF DESTRUCTION AND RUIN.

BL...AM



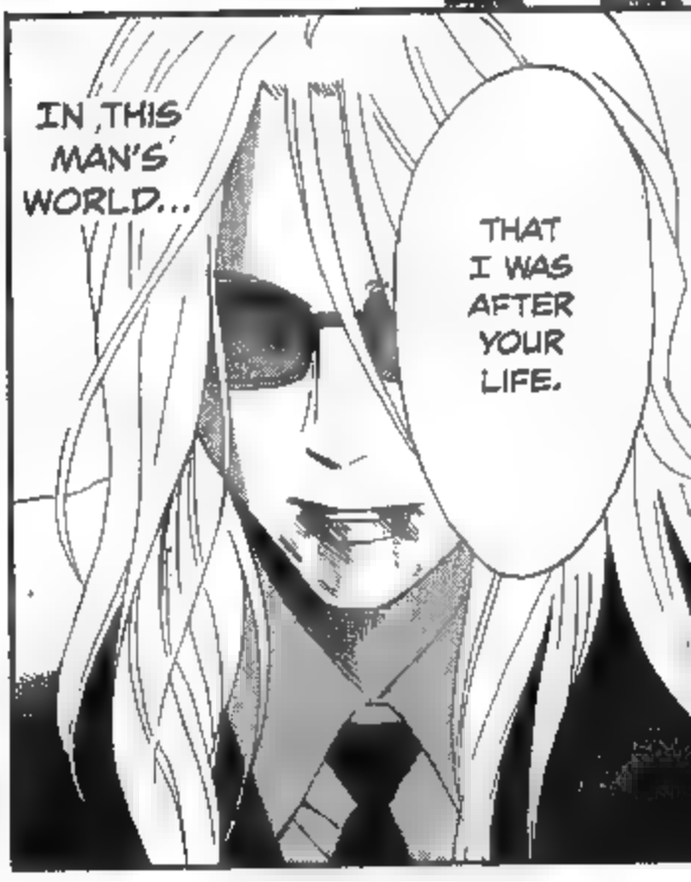
PLIP
PLIP
PLIP
...MAY HAVE BEEN...
AS LONG AS YOU, HIS PARTNER, ARE HERE, HE WON'T SHOOT ME.
...ALWAYS HOPING FOR THIS.

FOR SOMEONE WHO WITH OVERWHELMING STRENGTH...

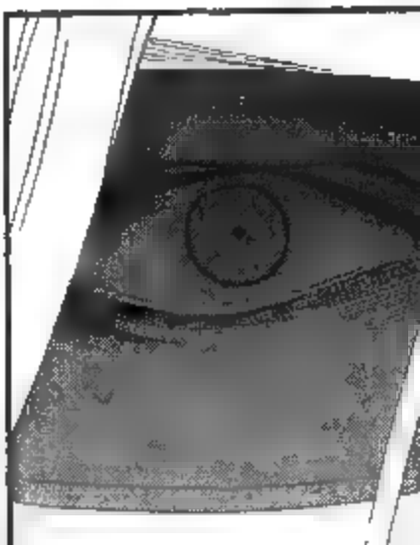
...WOULD CONTROL ME.

...
AFFECTION AND COMMON SENSE...
YOU KNEW, DIDN'T YOU.
"IF YOU VALUE YOUR PARTNER'S LIFE," HUH?
WHAT AN OLD FOOL...

...
...THEY DON'T EXIST.
YOU WERE?


IN THIS MAN'S WORLD...
THAT I WAS AFTER YOUR LIFE.

YOU REALLY ARE...
...DIFFERENT.
HEH...
HEH HEH...



...WHY DID YOU CHOOSE ME?
BACK IN THE MEETING ROOM...
WILL YOU TELL ME SOMETHING?
...
HEY.
BECAUSE YOUR EYES...
...WERE ASKING ME TO.

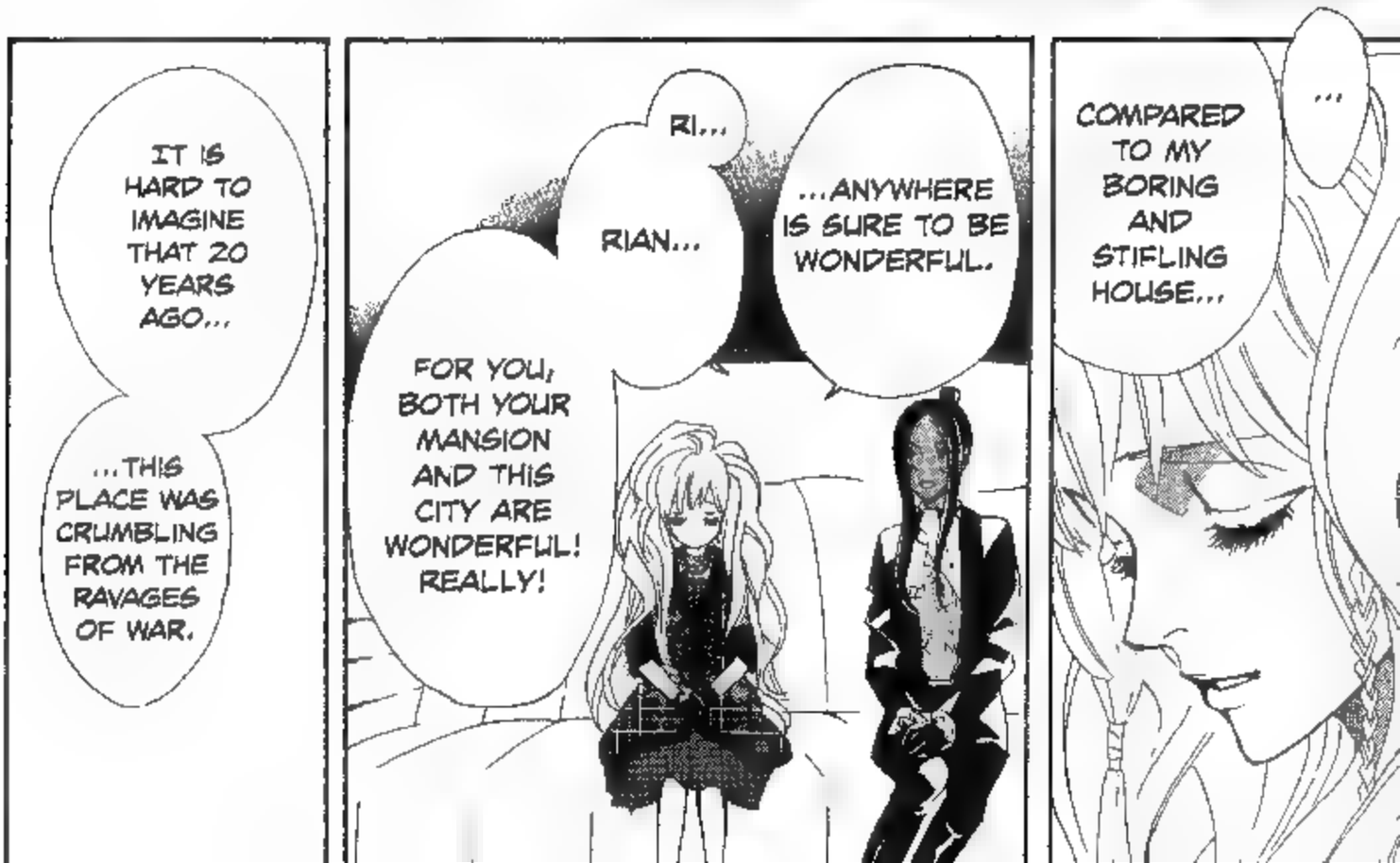
BECAUSE YOU INTERESTED ME...
...I DECIDED TO TAKE A RIDE WITH YOU, SEE WHERE IT WENT.
CONTROLLED BY...
DID YOU HAVE FUN?
...OVER-WHELMING EVIL.

CONTROLLING OR NOT CONTROLLING OTHERS?
SO THAT'S YOUR HAPPY STORY?
AH...
EVERYONE'S LIFE...
...IS CONTROLLED BY FATE.
PUFF
OR...
I'M SURE THAT ZEN, TOO... HERE, LOOK.

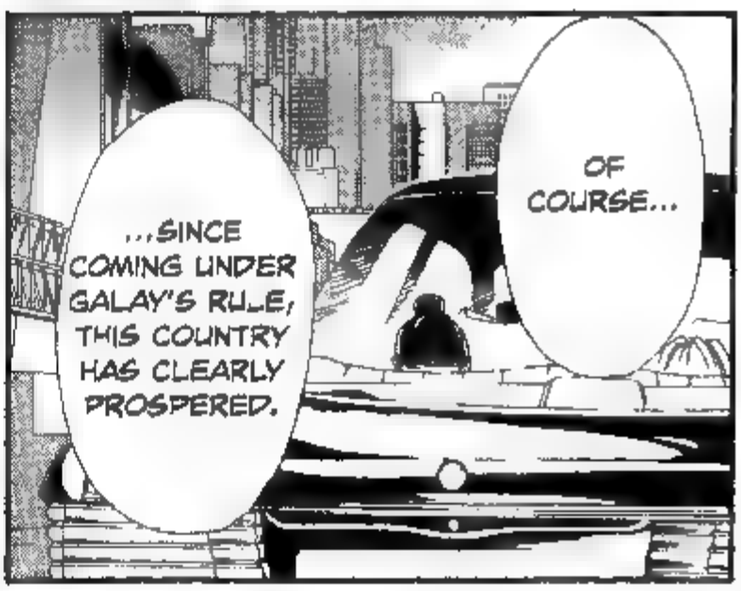
Blank Slate Chapter 1 / The End

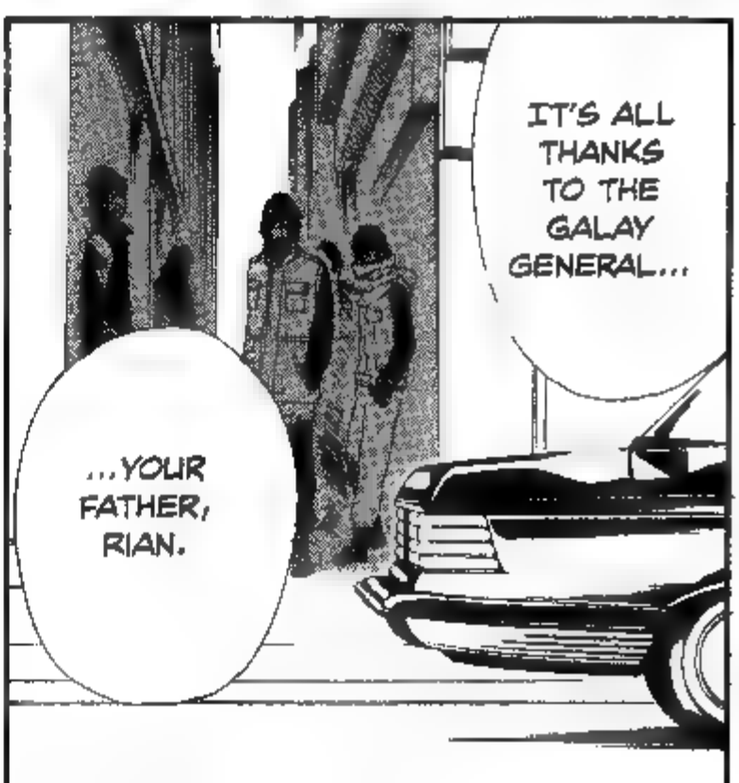
第2話 Chapter Two
悪化
アクサガ
BLANK SLATE

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL VIEW, RIAN.
DESTROY MY WORLD.
...AN AMAZING CITY.
NO MATTER WHEN YOU SEE IT, IT'S REALLY...


IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE THAT 20 YEARS AGO...
...THIS PLACE WAS CRUMBLING FROM THE RAVAGES OF WAR.
RI...
RIAN...
FOR YOU, BOTH YOUR MANSION AND THIS CITY ARE WONDERFUL! REALLY!
...ANYWHERE IS SURE TO BE WONDERFUL.
...
COMPARED TO MY BORING AND STIFLING HOUSE...

WAR IS SAD...
...BUT I'VE HEARD THAT THE REASON WE GALAYANS INVADED THIS PLACE...
...WAS TO SAVE THE PEOPLE OF AMATA FROM THEIR SUFFERING UNDER AN OPPRESSIVE GOVERNMENT.


OF COURSE...
...SINCE COMING UNDER GALAY'S RULE, THIS COUNTRY HAS CLEARLY PROSPERED.


IT'S ALL THANKS TO THE GALAY GENERAL...
...YOUR FATHER, RIAN.

KRRASSH
DESTROYER...
EEEEK!

CHOOSE.
...WORLD.
...COME DESTROY...
ARE YOU GOING TO GIVE ME...
...YOUR MONEY AND LIVE...
...MY HAPPY AND PEACEFUL ...
...OR BE KILLED AND HAVE YOUR MONEY STOLEN?

!
I KILL MY ENEMIES.
...FROM THAT MOMENT ON YOU WILL BECOME MY ENEMY.
ALL OF YOU...
IT'S OKAY. THIS GLASS IS BULLET-PROOF.
QUICK, CALL THE POLICE.
IF YOU INTERFERE...

...MY WORLD.
BULLETPROOF GLASS WON'T PROTECT YOU, YOU KNOW.
DESTROY.

SLAM
FWUMP

WANTED
COULD HE POSSIBLY BE...
...YOU HAVEN'T BEEN KILLED YET IS A MIRACLE.
HUH?
BAH!
THE FACT THAT...

BLAM
IT'S TOO SOON ...
...TO BE THE POLICE.
...?
SKREECH!

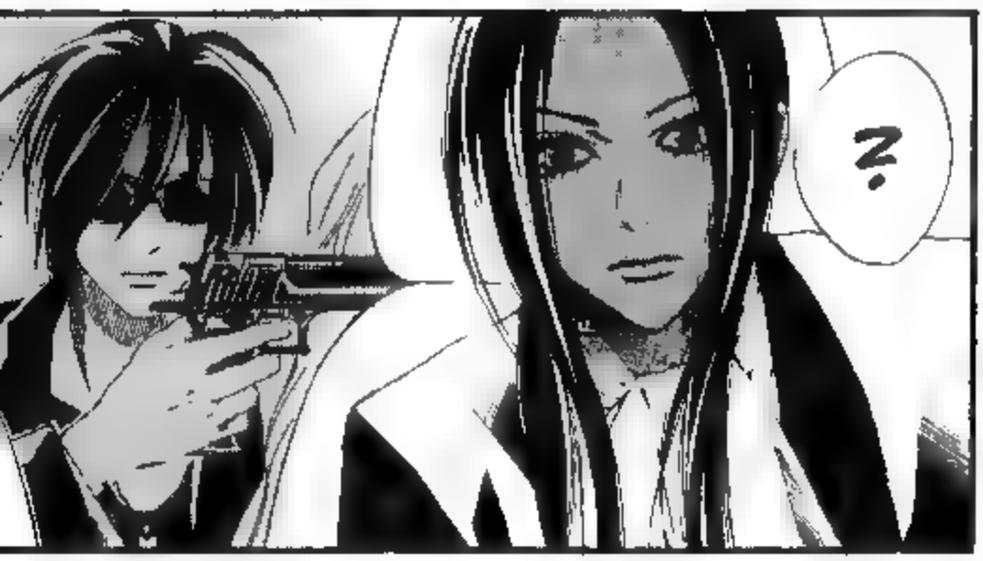
WHO'RE YOU?
WHAT A DRAG.
...
A STRAY BULLET?
MAKA!
HURRY UP AND GET OUT OF HERE!
WE'LL TAKE CARE OF IT!
TAKE CARE OF RIAN!

PATTA TATTA TATTA
AGH!
DON'T WORRY. I'LL PROTECT YOU.
TERRORISTS.
MAJOR KYRIE...?
WHAT HAPPENED, MAKA?

!!

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM

GET OUT! QUICK!
YOU'RE GOING TO DRIVE.
MAKA ...?
WHAT HAPPENED ...?
HUH?


?

THANK YOU...
TH...

...IF YOU DON'T WANT ME TO KILL THIS WOMAN.
DRIVE JUST AS I SAY...

WHAT DO YOU WANT?
...

THAT'S WHY... I'VE DECIDED TO CHANGE MY PLANS.
That's not our...
...
I WAS ON MY WAY BACK FROM A BANK ROBBERY...
...BUT THANKS TO YOU GUYS I'M UNABLE TO MAKE A QUICK GETAWAY.
A STRAY BULLET PUNCTURED MY CAR TIRE.

...!
I'M KIDNAPPING YOU FOR RANSOM MONEY.

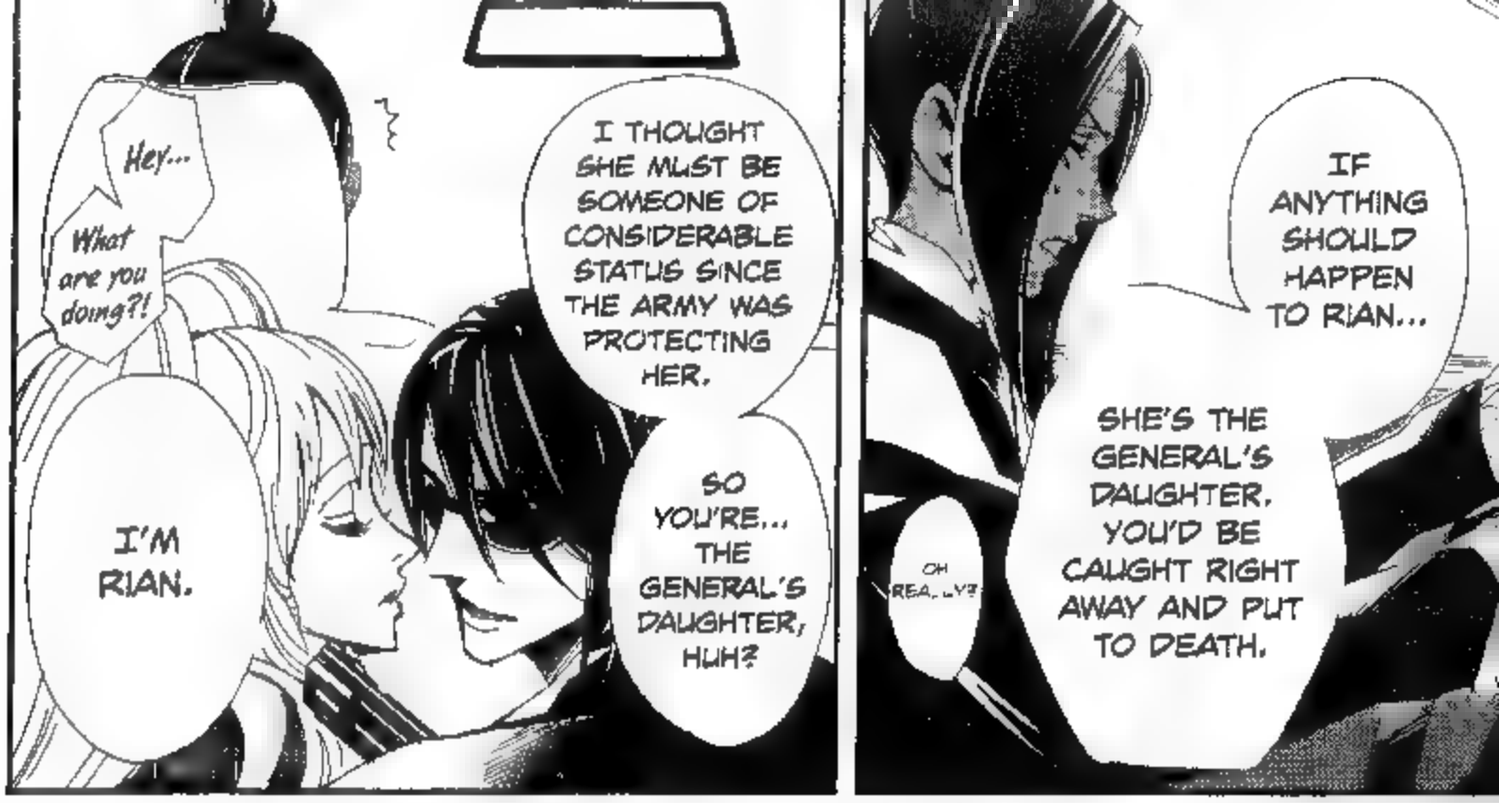
...A CRIMINAL.
YOU'RE...

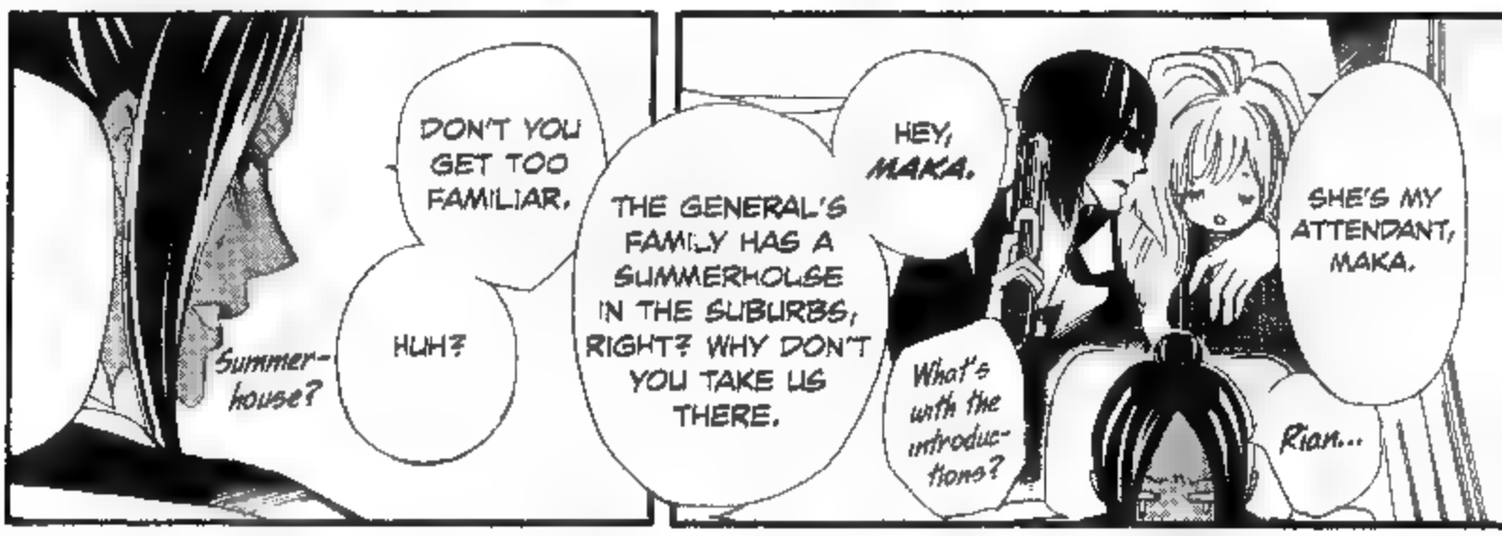
WHAT IS IT?
YOUR NAME...

RI...
RIAN?!

YOU...
CAN'T YOU SEE?

...
YOU'RE A CALM PRINCESS.
AREN'T YOU SCARED?


Hey...
What are you doing?!
I'M RIAN.
I THOUGHT SHE MUST BE SOMEONE OF CONSIDERABLE STATUS SINCE THE ARMY WAS PROTECTING HER.
SO YOU'RE... THE GENERAL'S DAUGHTER, HUH?
IF ANYTHING SHOULD HAPPEN TO RIAN...
SHE'S THE GENERAL'S DAUGHTER. YOU'D BE CAUGHT RIGHT AWAY AND PUT TO DEATH.
OH REALLY?


DON'T YOU GET TOO FAMILIAR.
Summer-house?
HUH?
THE GENERAL'S FAMILY HAS A SUMMERHOUSE IN THE SUBURBS, RIGHT? WHY DON'T YOU TAKE US THERE.
HEY, MAKA.
What's with the introductions?
SHE'S MY ATTENDANT, MAKA.
Rian...

I'M A DEAD MAN EVEN WITHOUT KIDNAPPING THE GENERAL'S DAUGHTER. SO LET'S TAKE A TRIP, SHALL WE?
I'M ZEN.

ZEN...
I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT IT.
BE STILL AND YOU'LL STAY ALIVE.
EXACTLY. AT LEAST NOT RIGHT AWAY.
NO ONE WOULD THINK THE GENERAL'S DAUGHTER IS BEING KEPT HOSTAGE IN HER OWN SUMMER-HOUSE.

I DIDN'T THINK IT WAS POSSIBLE, BUT...
THAT NAME... COULD YOU BE *HIM*...?
MISS!
ZEN...
FOR A LOWLY ATTENDANT, YOU'VE GOT GOOD INSTINCTS.

I WASN'T EXPECTING YOU...
!

THREE OF YOU?
WHO'S THIS?
THE CARE-TAKER!

YES...
WE MADE PLANS FOR RIAN'S FRIENDS TO COME OVER LATER... WE WANTED TO HANG OUT IN PRIVATE.
Nice save, Rian.
TODAY ...
...WE CAME WITHOUT TELLING ANYONE.
...
HE...
HE'S A BODYGUARD, RIGHT, RIAN?
YEAH.

THERE ARE RUMORS THAT IT WAS ZEN.
THERE WAS A BANK ROBBERY IN THE CITY.

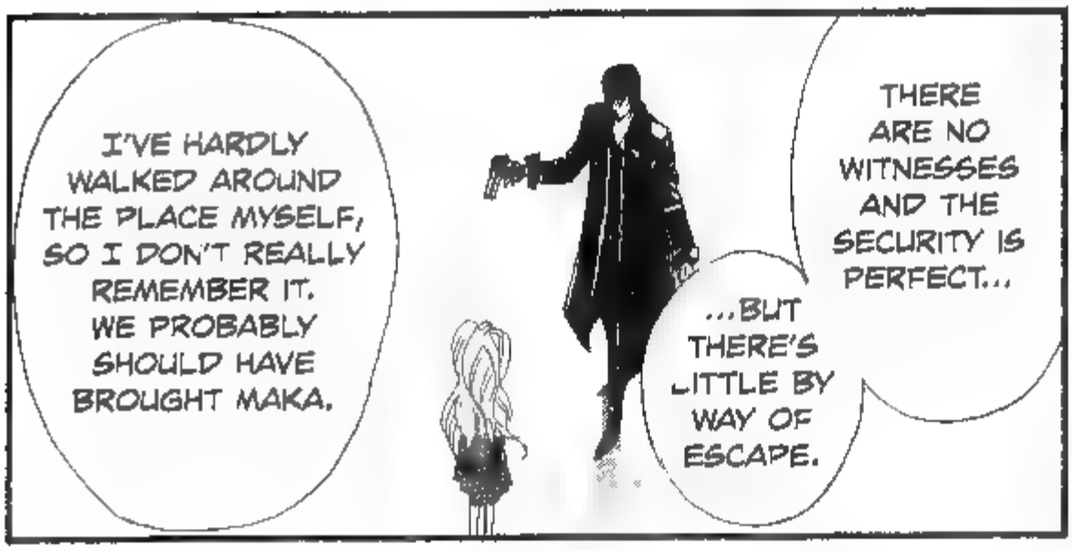
?
!
HUH? THAT'S VERY KIND OF YOU, BUT...
WE'D LIKE TO BE ALONE...
YOU CAN GO HOME FOR A WHILE.

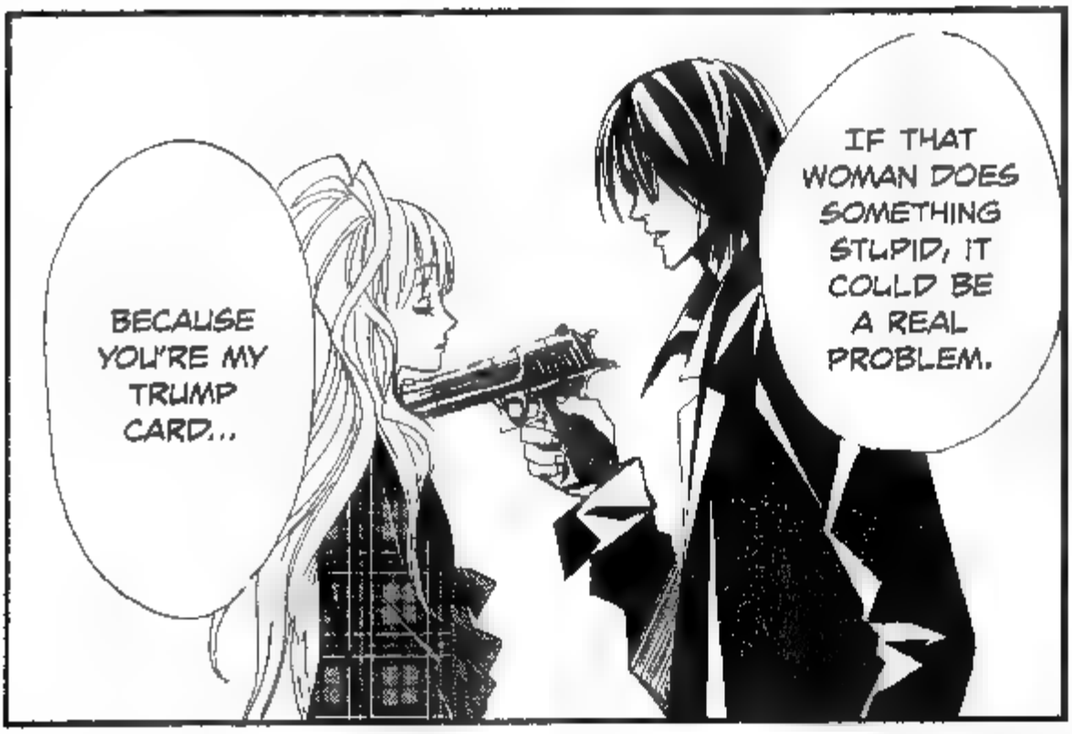
AND NOW HE'S ON THE LOOSE. I'M WORRIED.
THEY SAY HE'S EVIL...
THEY SAY HE HAS COMMITTED ALL KINDS OF HEINOUS CRIMES: MURDER, ASSAULT AND BATTERY, ROBBERY...

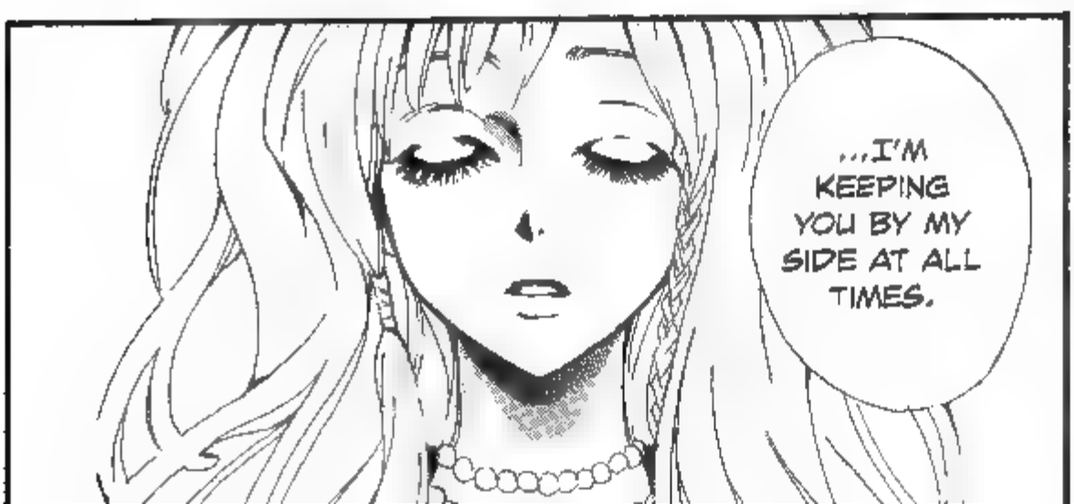
WELL THAT'S A RELIEF.
WITH HIM HERE, THERE'S NO NEED TO FEAR ZEN!
DON'T WORRY! THIS GUY IS VERY SKILLED.
SO YOU ARE...
...ZEN, AREN'T YOU.
Thanks.
The key...
YEAH.
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT?!

TODAY...
...WAS A CLASSICAL CONCERT THAT I GO TO ONLY ONCE A YEAR.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
IT'S SO STRANGE...
...WE MEET THE WORST VILLAIN ALIVE ON TODAY OF ALL DAYS...
WELL, HOW LUCKY THEN.
...
...ARE THIS DAY... AND IN THE SUMMER WHEN I COME HERE.
THE ONLY TIMES I EVER GET TO LEAVE THE MANSION...
THIS ONE'S LIFE IS IN MY HANDS.
I HAVE NO REASON TO HESITATE.
DON'T TRY ANYTHING FUNNY.
WH...
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
AGH!
LET ME TELL YOU RIGHT NOW...
RIAN!

YES...
...AS FAR AS I KNOW.
IS THAT ALL?


I'VE HARDLY WALKED AROUND THE PLACE MYSELF, SO I DON'T REALLY REMEMBER IT. WE PROBABLY SHOULD HAVE BROUGHT MAKA.
...BUT THERE'S LITTLE BY WAY OF ESCAPE.
THERE ARE NO WITNESSES AND THE SECURITY IS PERFECT...


BECAUSE YOU'RE MY TRUMP CARD...
IF THAT WOMAN DOES SOMETHING STUPID, IT COULD BE A REAL PROBLEM.


...I'M KEEPING YOU BY MY SIDE AT ALL TIMES.

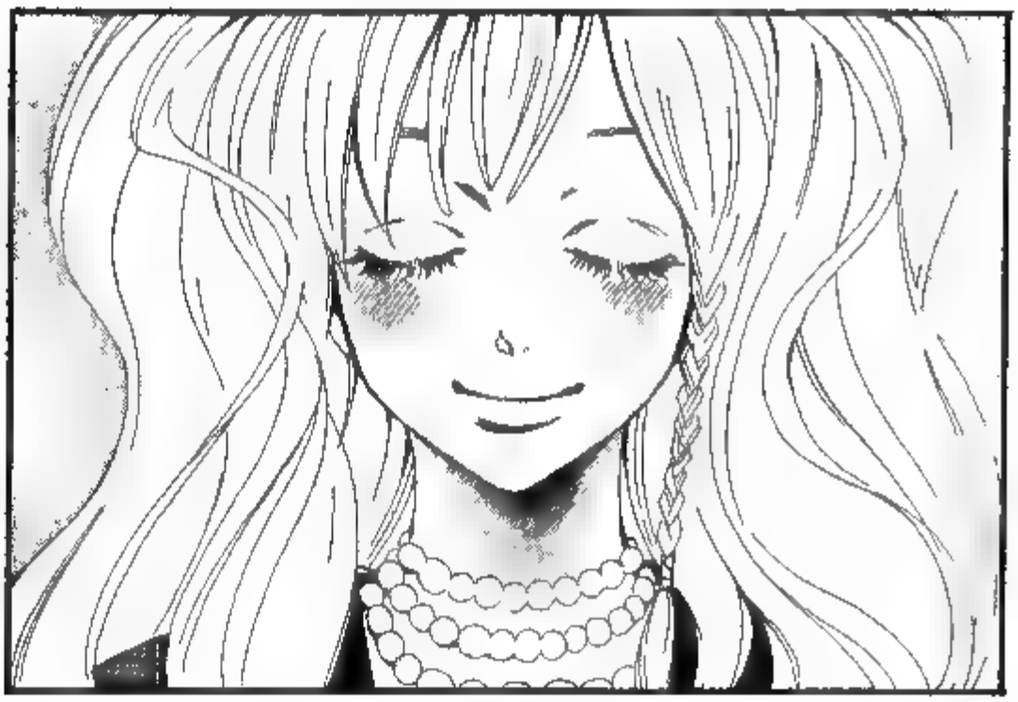
SIX BED-ROOMS...
...A LIVING ROOM, KITCHEN, BATHROOM, TOILET, DINING ROOM, PLUS FOUR OTHER ROOMS...
...AND A SHED.

2

It's completely my fault, but when I wrote the first episode of *Blank Slate*, I didn't think it would be serialized just like that, and I wrote the first episode completely viewing it as a standalone. Even should it be serialized, I thought I would be able to make a fresh start at it, so I was surprised when I saw it in the magazine as "Chapter 1".. Because of that, a lack of consistency arose between the serialized *Blank Slate* and the "Chapter 1" in the magazine, so I decided to change Chapter 1 in order to make the story easier to understand when we put out the graphic novel.

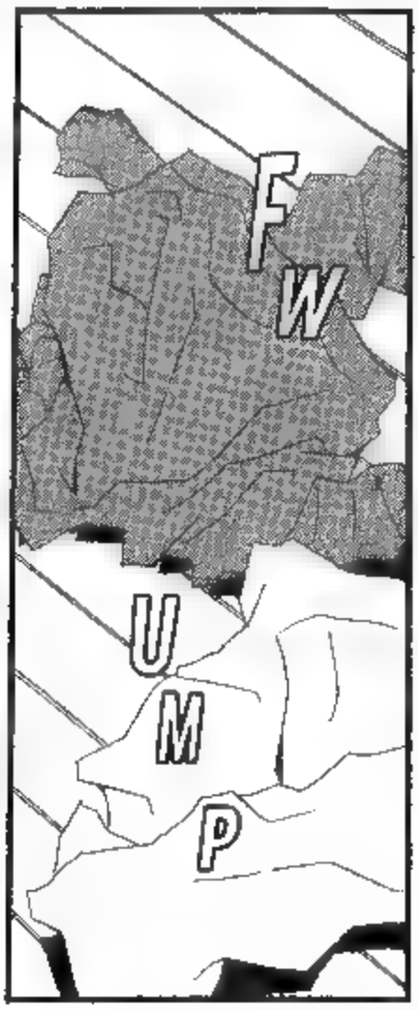
(To be continued.)

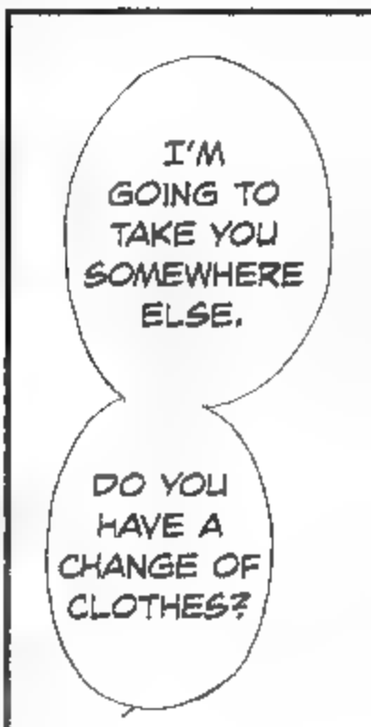
BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT MAKES IT PUBLIC, THEY'LL TRY THEIR HARDEST TO RESOLVE THIS QUIETLY.
THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE THAT I'LL BE HUNTED DOWN.
TRUMP CARD...



...
YOU'RE INTERESTING.
MY FATHER AND ALL THE HELP ARE OUT OF SIGHT.
IT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE BEEN WITHOUT SUPERVISION SINCE I WAS BORN.
...
If Maka heard, she'd be angry.

TAKE 'EM OFF.


FWUMP


I'M GOING TO TAKE YOU SOMEWHERE ELSE.
DO YOU HAVE A CHANGE OF CLOTHES?

YOU'LL STAND OUT LIKE THAT. GET CHANGED.
UM...
...

..
I THINK THE SERVANTS KEEP SOME PERSONAL CLOTHES HERE.

I...
I'VE NEVER CHANGED CLOTHES BY MYSELF BEFORE.
SORRY..

...
LET'S TAKE OFF YOUR SUNGLASSES.
SHE'S...
...
!
YOU'RE SO HANDSOME.

...I KNEW...
...ZEN...
...BEFORE, FROM THE NEWS.
YOU CAN TELL JUST BY TOUCHING ME?
YES, FOR THE MOST PART.
BUT...
TRAMPLING ON LAW AND MORALITY...
THROWING THIS PEACEFUL COUNTRY INTO CHAOS...
DEMONIC...
I BET NO ONE KNOWS...
...HOW BEAUTIFUL YOU ARE.
THAT'S EXACTLY RIGHT.
NO.
YOUR FACE ISN'T DEMONIC.
THE TRUTH...
...IS NOT ALWAYS VISIBLE TO THE EYE.

AND SOME THINGS CAN'T BE KNOWN UNLESS THEY ARE SEEN.

I'LL TELL YOU THE AMOUNT AND METHOD OF EXCHANGE LATER.
YOUR DAUGHTER'S LIFE IN EXCHANGE FOR MONEY.

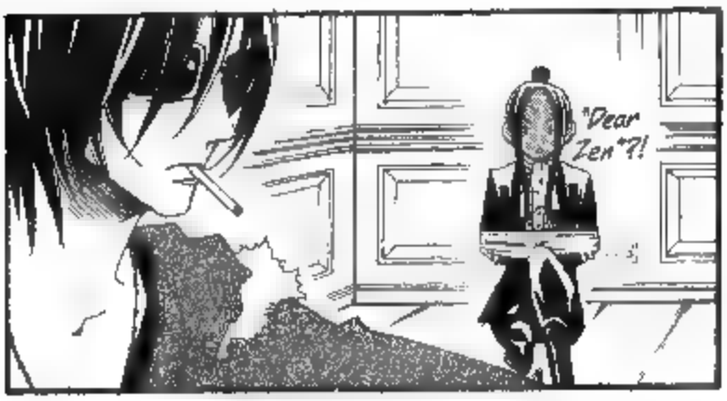
TU
NK

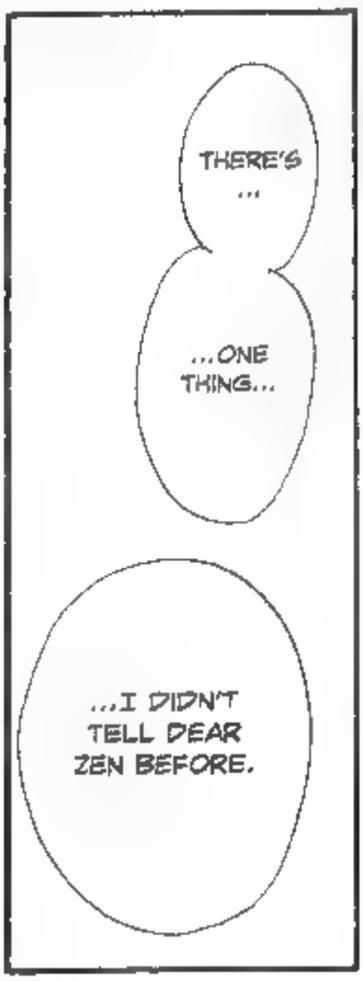
...
YES! I TALKED FOR LESS THAN TEN SECONDS.
YOU'RE REALLY SOMETHING, ZEN. I DON'T EVEN KNOW MY HOME PHONE NUMBER, BUT *YOU* DID.
DID YOU DO IT JUST THE WAY I ASKED?
TH...
THAT'S THE FIRST TIME SINCE I WAS BORN THAT I'VE EVER TOUCHED A PHONE.

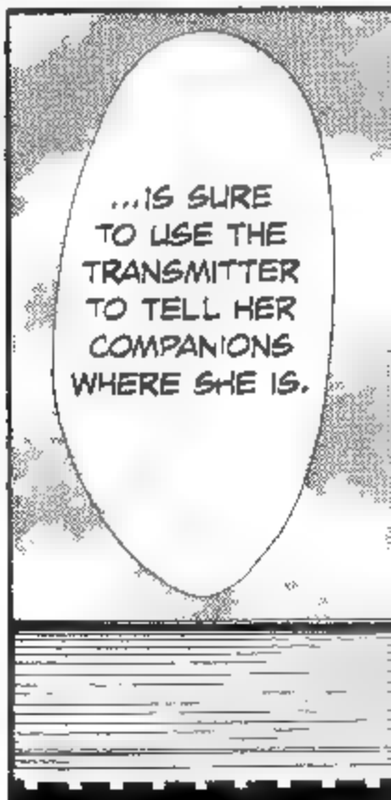
THEY HUNG UP.
...

EVEN IF IT COSTS MY LIFE, I WILL RESCUE HER AND SEE HER SAFE.
GENERAL ...
...IF SOME-TH,NG HAPPENS TO MY DAUGHTER...
MAJOR KYRIE...
...IS IMPOSSIBLE. IT WAS TOO BRIEF.
TRAC,NG THE CA.L...

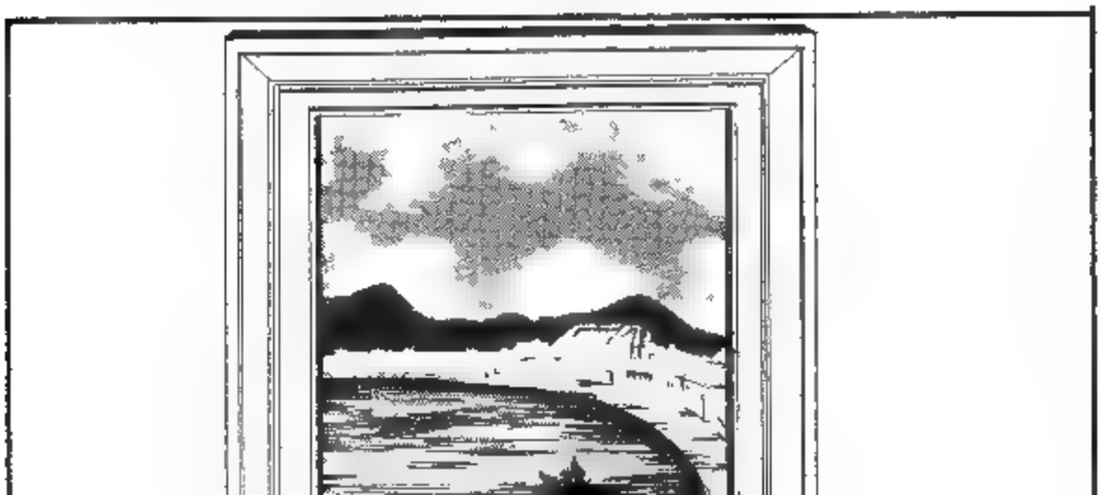
WE HAVE ALREADY CAPTURED THE TERRORIST'S COMPANIONS.
AND THEIR PLANS HAVE ALREADY BEEN THWARTED.
BEFORE LONG THE PERSON WHO KIDNAPPED RIAN...


"Dear Zen"?!


THERE'S ...
...ONE THING...
...I DIDN'T TELL DEAR ZEN BEFORE.

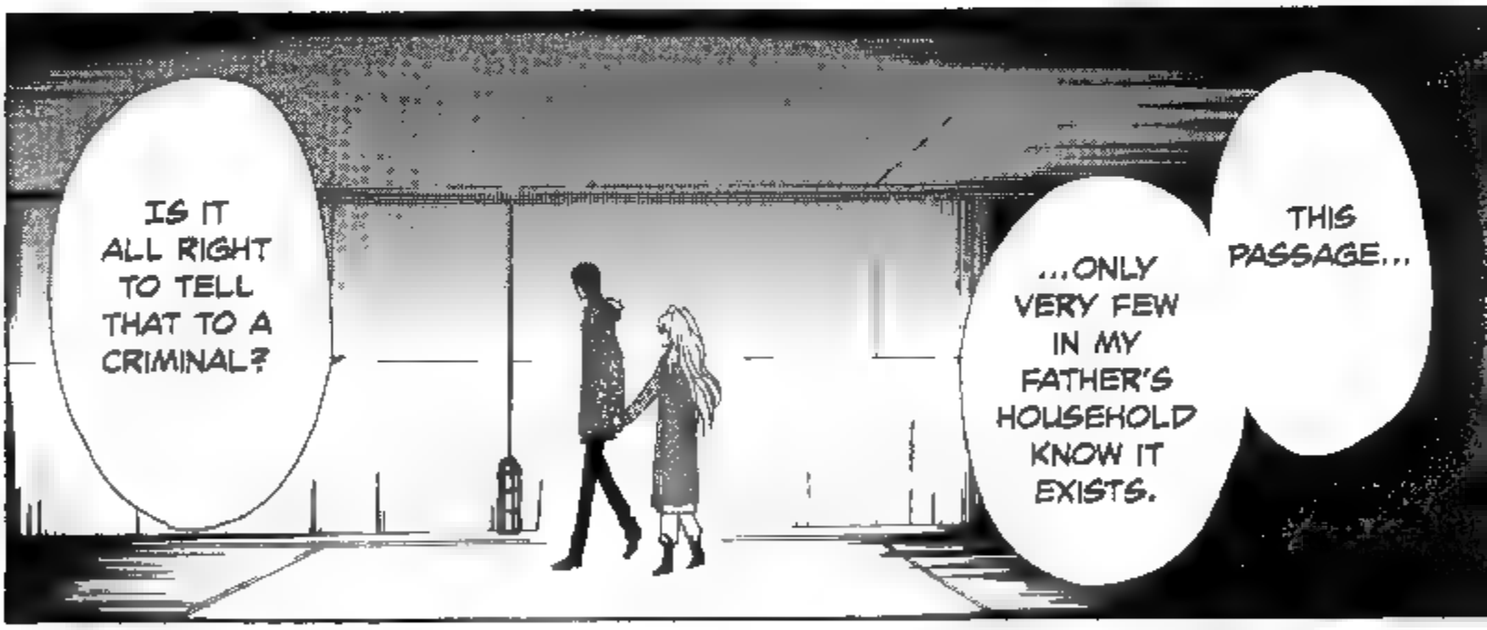

...IS SURE TO USE THE TRANSMITTER TO TELL HER COMPANIONS WHERE SHE IS.

ACTUALLY...



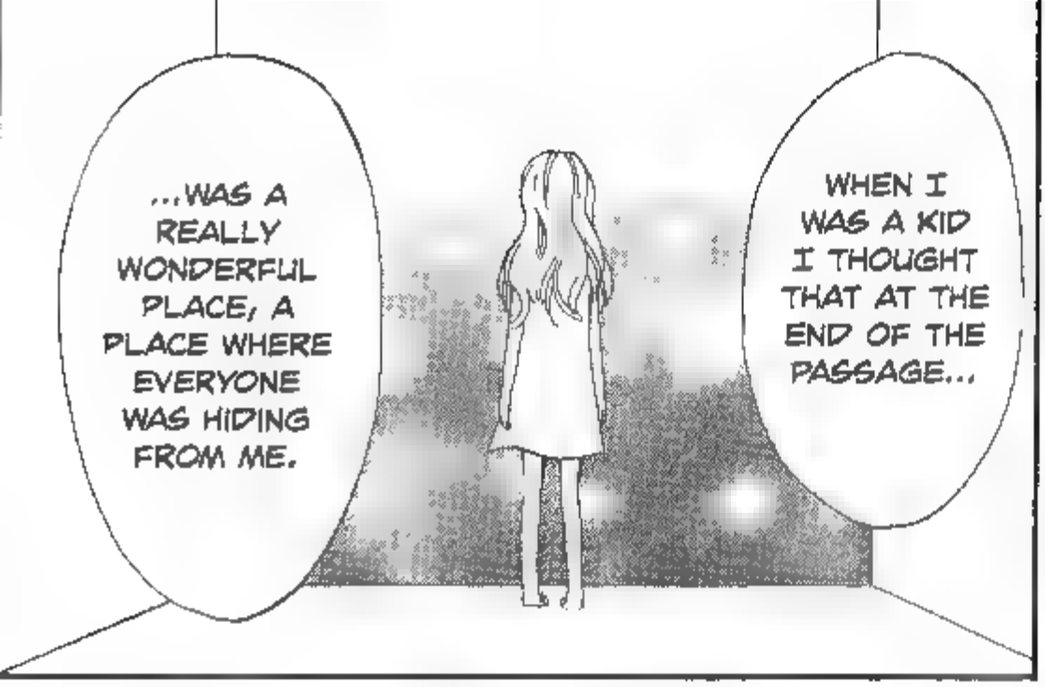
TH
U
NK
SKRRK
SKRRK
...EVEN I DON'T KNOW WHERE IT LEADS.
I THINK IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE A FIRE ESCAPE, BUT...
A HIDDEN PASSAGE, HUH?
I IMAGINE IT'S DARK...
...SO BE CAREFUL.
I'VE GOT GOOD EYES IN THE DARK.
AND YOU-

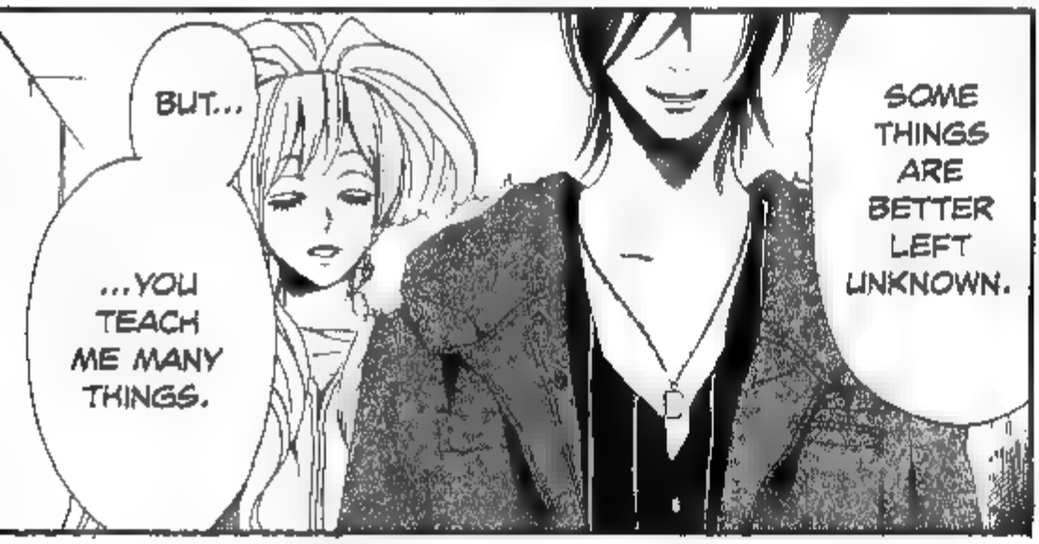
I'M...
I'M ALWAYS IN THE DARK.


IS IT ALL RIGHT TO TELL THAT TO A CRIMINAL?
...ONLY VERY FEW IN MY FATHER'S HOUSEHOLD KNOW IT EXISTS.
THIS PASSAGE...

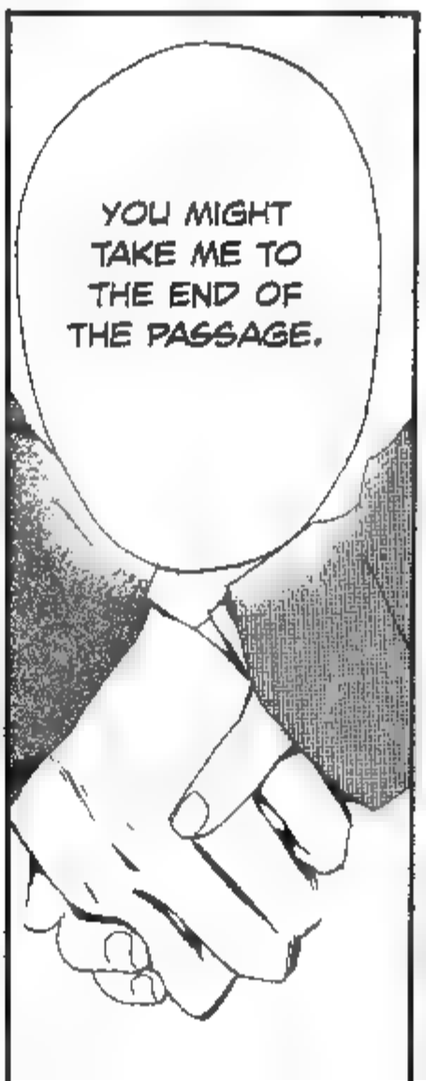
...WHAT LIES AT THE END.
...WANTED TO KNOW...

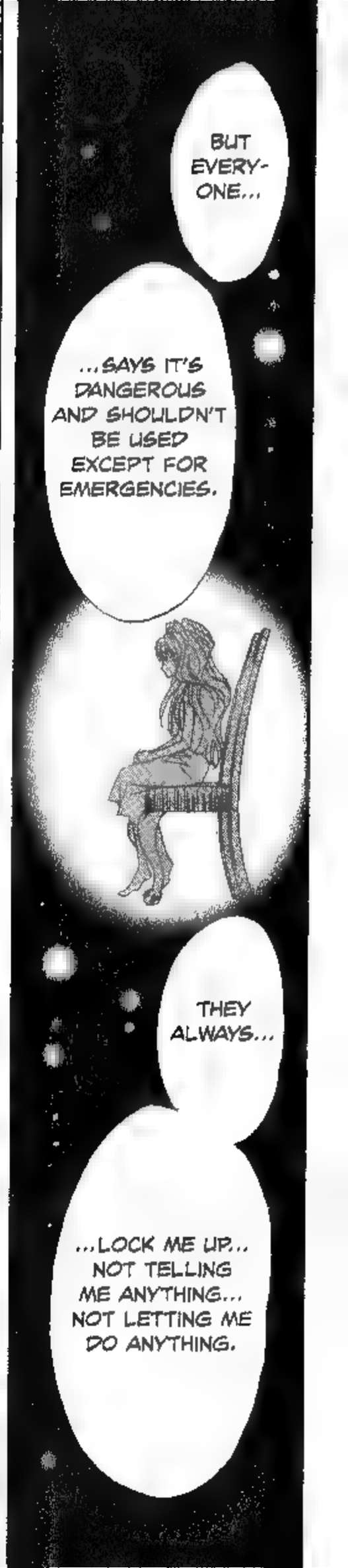
HONESTLY...
...I ALWAYS...


...WAS A REALLY WONDERFUL PLACE, A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE WAS HIDING FROM ME.
WHEN I WAS A KID I THOUGHT THAT AT THE END OF THE PASSAGE...


BUT...
...YOU TEACH ME MANY THINGS.
SOME THINGS ARE BETTER LEFT UNKNOWN.

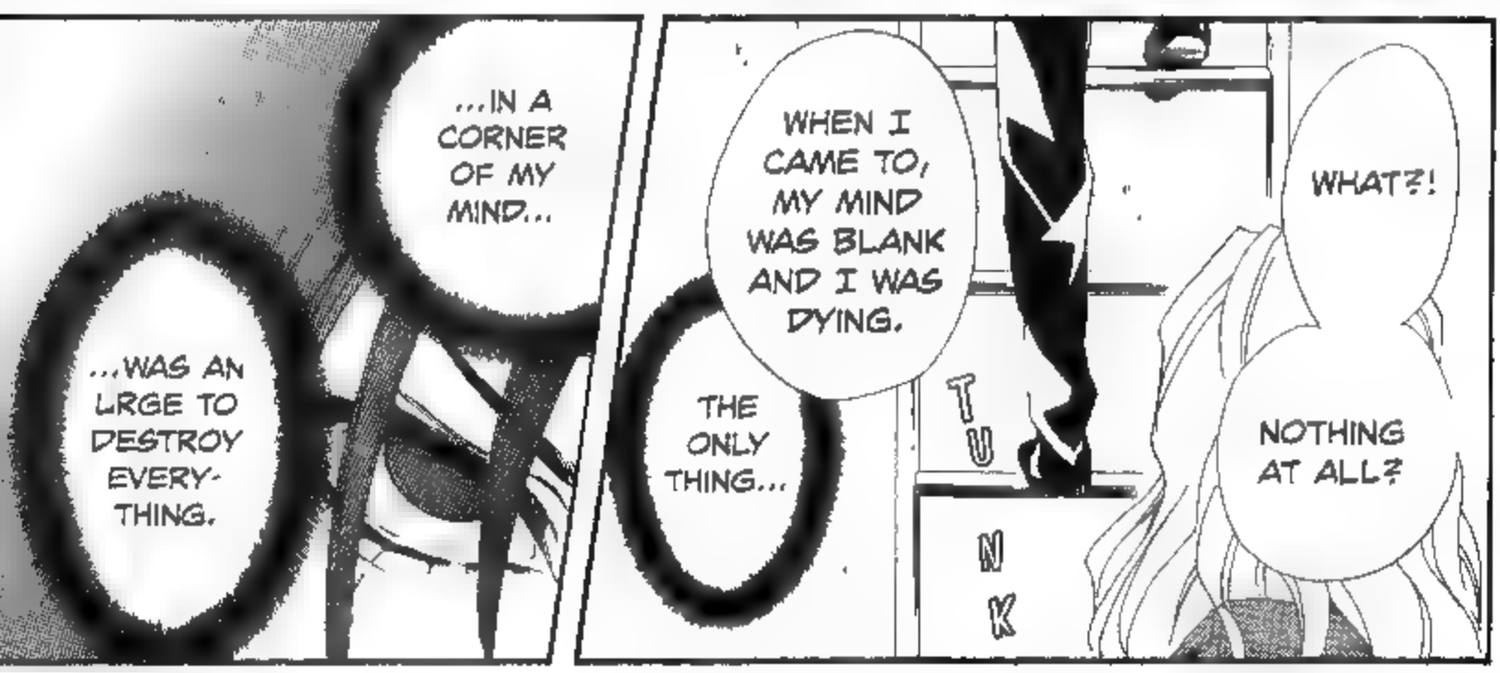
YOU MIGHT SHOW ME WHAT'S THERE.
THAT'S WHAT I THINK.


YOU MIGHT TAKE ME TO THE END OF THE PASSAGE.


BUT EVERY-ONE...
...SAYS IT'S DANGEROUS AND SHOULDN'T BE USED EXCEPT FOR EMERGENCIES.
THEY ALWAYS...
...LOCK ME UP... NOT TELLING ME ANYTHING... NOT LETTING ME DO ANYTHING.

I JUST LIVE DOING WHAT I WANT.
WITHOUT REASON OR MEANING.
...ANYTHING THAT I CAN TEACH OTHERS.
THERE ISN'T...
I MAY KNOW EVEN LESS THAN YOU...
...BECAUSE I DON'T EVEN KNOW MY OWN PAST.
I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING.
LIKE YOU... NO...
THE EXIT'S UP ABOVE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN ABOUT YOUR PAST?
YOUR PAST?
IT'S A DEAD END.

I HAVE NO MEMORY OF THE LAST 20 YEARS.


...IN A CORNER OF MY MIND...
...WAS AN URGE TO DESTROY EVERY-THING.
WHEN I CAME TO, MY MIND WAS BLANK AND I WAS DYING.
THE ONLY THING...
TU
NK
WHAT?!
NOTHING AT ALL?

I DON'T REALLY CARE.
I'M GONNA OPEN IT.
KL
UNK
ZEN...
...WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO KNOW YOUR PAST?

GRIP
SHUNNK
NGH....
?
ZA
NG
A CEMETERY...

...
WOULD IT HAVE BEEN BETTER NOT TO KNOW?

...

IT'S A SOLDIERS'...
...GRAVEYARD.
FOR THOSE WHO DIED IN THE WAR.

NOW THAT WE KNOW WHAT'S HERE, THERE'S NO POINT N BEING HERE.. LET'S GO BACK.
THE WAR HAPPENED OVER 20 YEARS AGO...
AND SINCE I WAS BORN AFTER IT ENDED... I CAN BARELY IMAGINE.

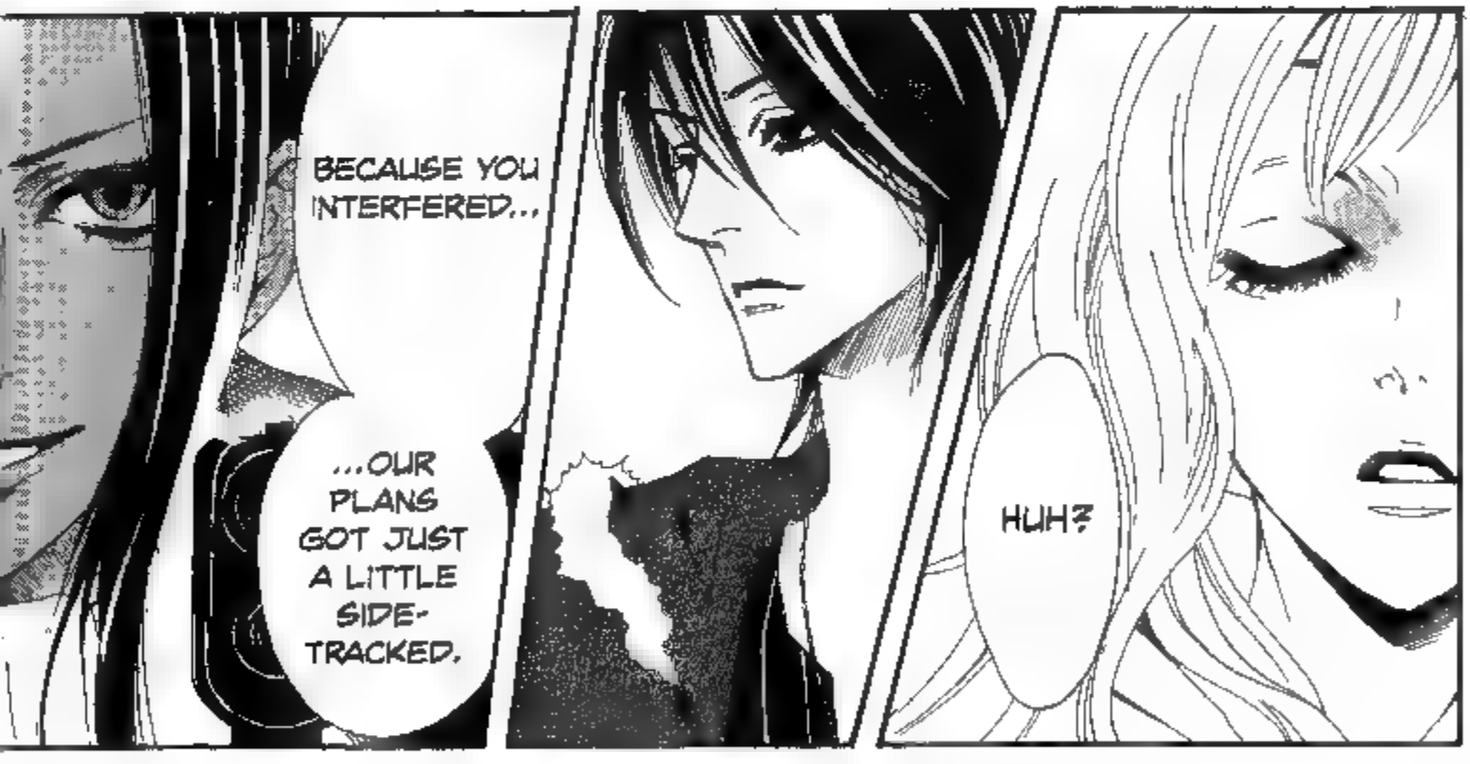
...I DON'T THINK IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER NOT TO KNOW.
IT'S GOOD THAT YOU BROUGHT ME HERE AND I LEARNED THE TRUTH.
...I...
ZEN...
GRAB
YOU...
...DESTROYED MY WORLD.
...WORLD? YOUR...
...
JUST LIKE THIS, WILL YOU...
...TAKE ME WITH YOU SOME-WHERE?
...A SMALL AND NARROW WORLD.
I'M SO PROTECTED HERE...
YOU'VE LED ME OUT OF...

...ISN'T ALL FUN.
THE TRUTH OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD...
IF AT THAT POINT..
YOU'RE ONLY A HOSTAGE.
ONCE I GET THE RANSOM, I DON'T NEED YOU.
ONLY MY OWN THOUGHTS MATTER.
...DESTROY YOUR WORLD YOURSELF.
...YOU STILL WANT TO BE FREE...

SHR
RIP
KRK
KRK
KRK
KLIK
...
MAKA...?

BL
NGH...
YOU REALLY ARE ZEN!
THAT VOICE...
MAKA?
A
M
!
ARE YOU OKAY, MAKA?
RIAN...
I'M TAKING THE RICH GIRL BACK.
ZEN...
GRAB

ORIGINALLY, SHE WAS...
...OUR PREY.


HUH?
BECAUSE YOU INTERFERED...
...OUR PLANS GOT JUST A LITTLE SIDE-TRACKED.

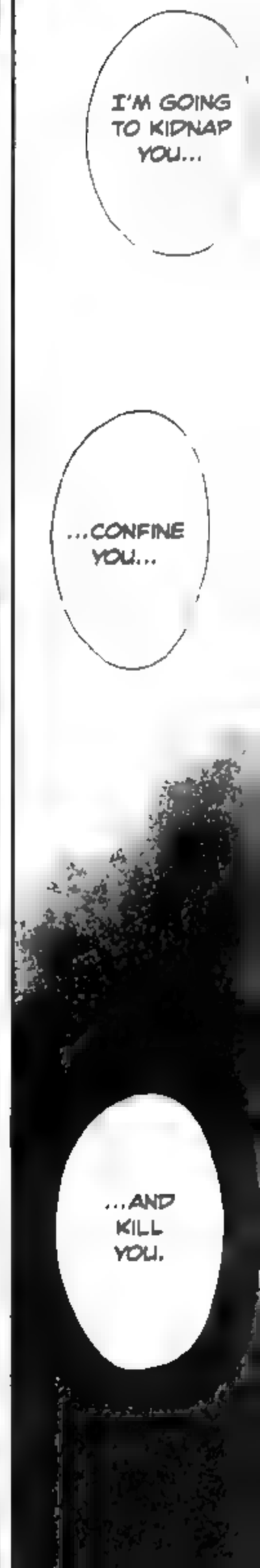
IF YOU DIE HERE, EVERYTHING WILL CONTINUE AS PLANNED.
EARLIER I CONTACTED MY COM-RADES WITH MY LOCATION.
THEY SHOULD BE HERE SOON.

WHAT IF THE ARMY HAS CAPTURED YOUR GROUP?
IF YOUR TRANSMISSION HAS BEEN INTERCEPTED, THE GOVERNMENT KNOWS WHERE YOU ARE.
...
YOU'RE WITH THE TERRORISTS, ARE YA?
WE HATE THE GOVERNMENT.
EVEN IF CAP-TURED...
...MY COMRADES WOULDN'T BLAB THEIR PLANS TO THE GOVERNMENT.
RIAN...
IT WAS ALL-INCLUDING MY SERVICE TO YOU ALL THESE LONG YEARS-FOR THE SAKE OF THE PLAN.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN...
...MAKA?
WH...

...KILLED MY ONLY SISTER.
IN ORDER TO GET REVENGE...
...ON YOUR GALAY ARMY AND GENERAL, WHO IN THE WAR 20 YEARS AGO...

DECADES MAY PASS, BUT HATE DOESN'T GO AWAY.
GALAY KILLED SOMEONE IMPORTANT TO EACH OF THEM.
IT'S THE SAME WITH MY COMRADES.

...IS THAT... TRUE?
MAKA...
THAT'S...


I'M GOING TO KIDNAP YOU...
...CONFINE YOU...
...AND KILL YOU.

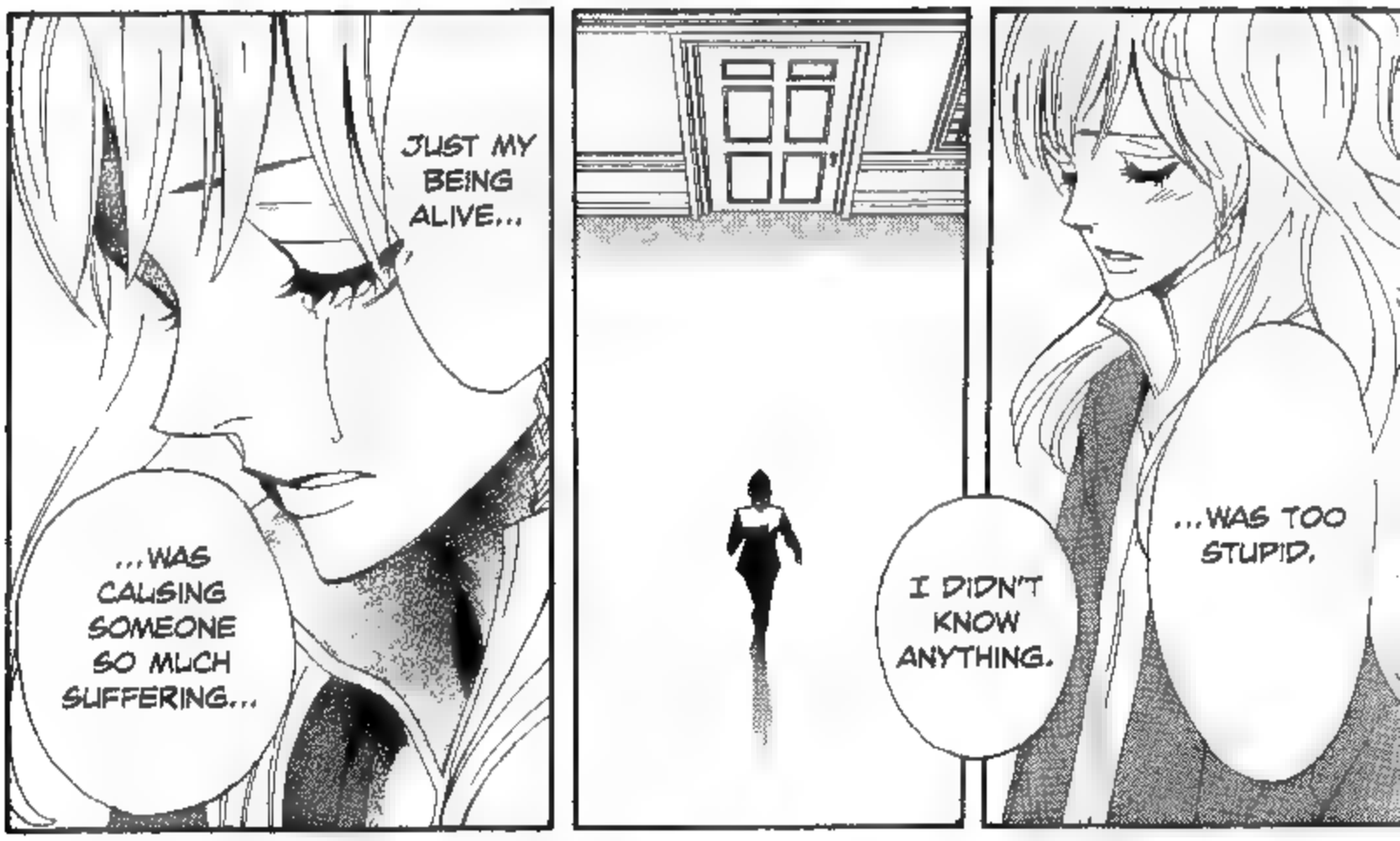
EVEN IF YOU KILL THE GALAYANS... YOUR HEART WILL NOT SETTLE.
...OUR HEARTS WILL KNOW NO PEACE.
UNTIL WE KILL YOU... AND THE GENERAL...
...AND THE PEOPLE OF GALAY...

SO...
I'LL GIVE HER BACK... SOMEDAY.
THAT'S MY HOSTAGE.
...WAIT FOR HER IN HELL!
GIVE HER BACK.

BLAM
STOP...!
NO!
SHOCK
AGH!

VRROOM
!
...
EVEN IF YOU BREAK THE TRANSMITTER NOW...
...IT'S TOO LATE. IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE MY COMRADES...
TA-DU-
THE TABLES HAVE TURNED!
...
MAKA...!

I...
...
...


JUST MY BEING ALIVE...
...WAS CAUSING SOMEONE SO MUCH SUFFERING...
I DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING.
...WAS TOO STUPID.

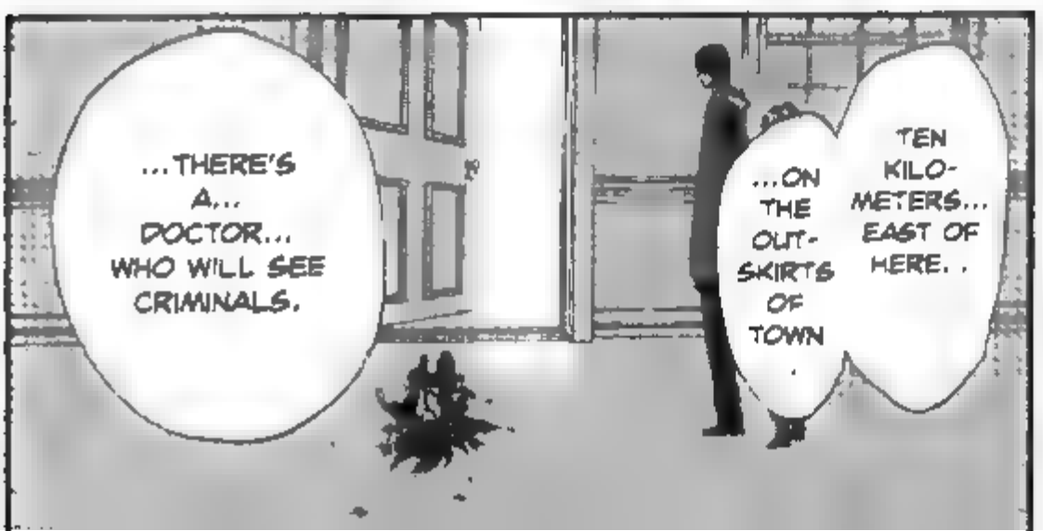
FIRE.

...
ZEN...
IS MAKA...

...
ZE...
...N...

...
...MUST BE... FAIRLY... DEEP...
HM...?

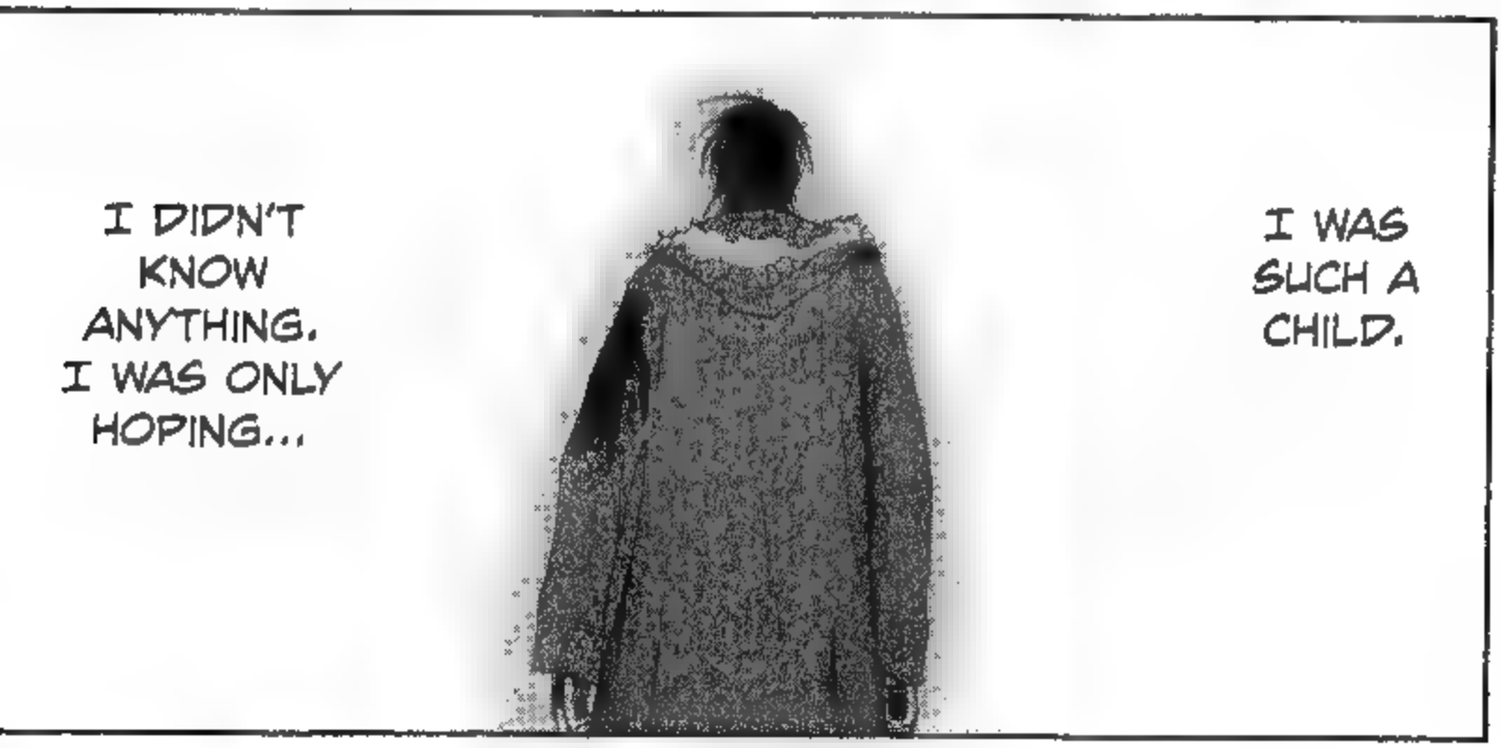
MAKA...
...
...THAT...
...WOUND...


...THERE'S A... DOCTOR... WHO WILL SEE CRIMINALS.
...ON THE OUT-SKIRTS OF TOWN.
TEN KILO-METERS... EAST OF HERE..

...GIVE HIM... THAT BRACELET...
I WANT... YOU TO...
HE'S MY...
... BROTHER... HIS NAME IS HAKKA...
...
AN EXCHANGE, HUH?
MAKA...
...IT?
...
THAT'S NOT SO BAD...
...IS...
ACCORDING TO HER COMRADES' CONFESSIONS.
YES... MOST LIKELY.
IS THAT WOMAN THE ONLY TERRORIST?

USE THAT PASSAGE TO RUN AWAY!
NOW! QUICKLY!
...PERHAPS THEY DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU.
ZEN...
ALL RIGHT...
...CHARGE IN!
BUT YOU'RE INJURED.
I WOULDN'T WANT TO SLOW YOU DOWN.
I HAVEN'T GOT MY MONEY YET.
YOU COME TOO.
...

THANK YOU SO MUCH.
I...


I DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING. I WAS ONLY HOPING...
I WAS SUCH A CHILD.

NO MATTER HOW SAD THE OUTSIDE WORLD IS...
ZEN...
I... HAVE DECIDED.

...I WILL GET STRONG... BECOME AN ADULT...
...AND SOMEDAY SURELY... WITH MY OWN HANDS...
...DESTROY MY WORLD...
...AND GO TO MEET YOU...

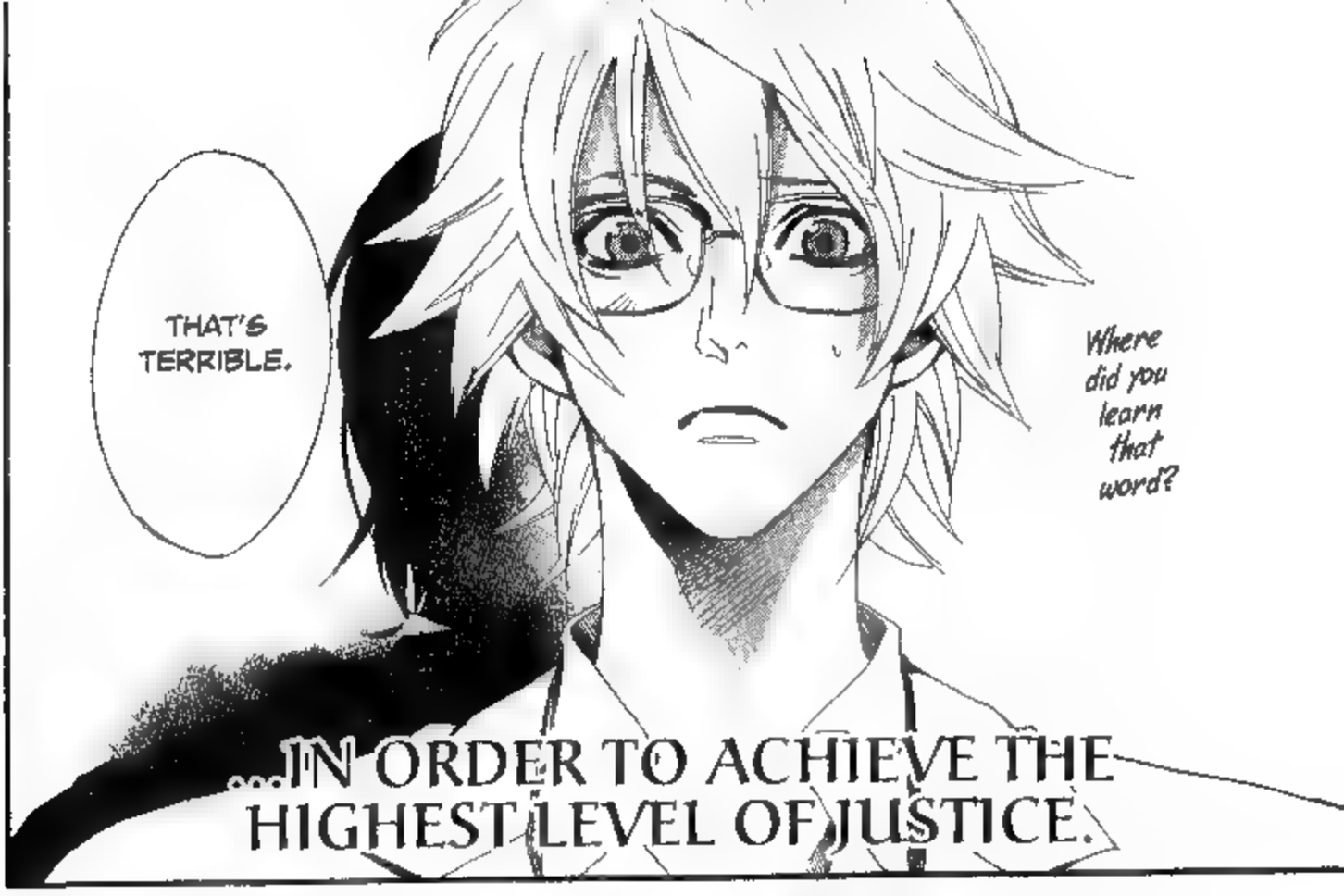
第3話
Chapter Three
BLANK SLATE
scan by why
悪人
アクサガ

BECOME
EVIL...

...FOR THE FIGHT...

...OR PERHAPS...

FOR TRUE FREEDOM...


THAT'S TERRIBLE.
Where did you learn that word?
...IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF JUSTICE.

KSH
AK

AND... WHO'RE YOU?
...
Y... YES...
YOU...
ARE YOU... HAKKA...?

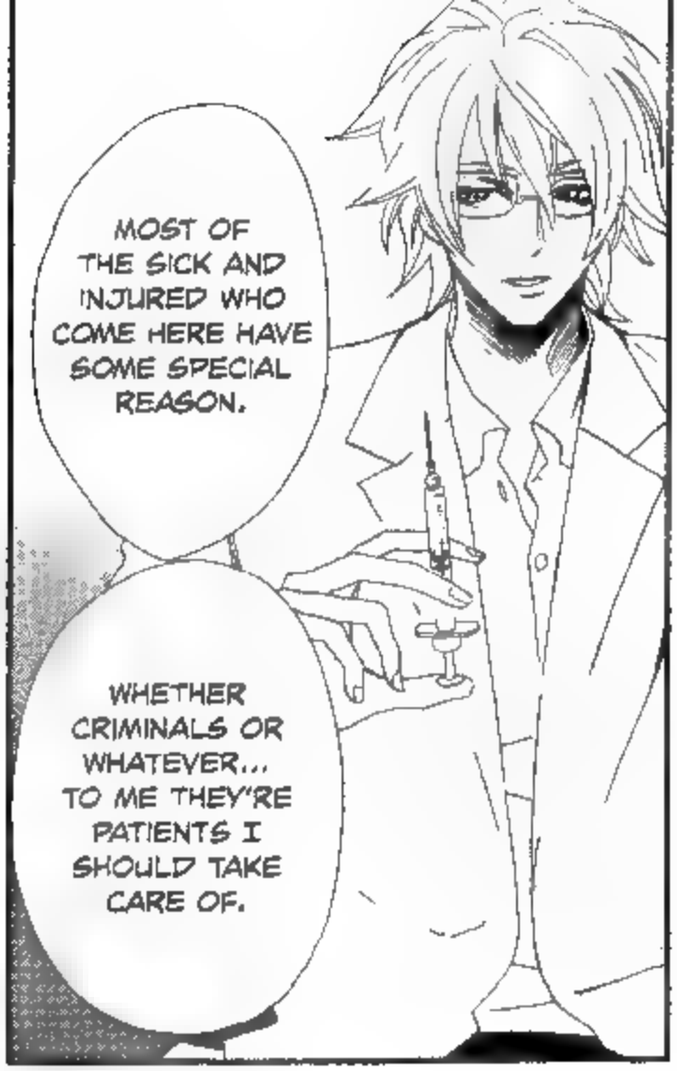
HURRY, HAKKA... AND TREAT MY WOUND.
I'M ZEN.
...MONEY.
...IN PLACE OF...
TAKE THIS...
...
SLUMP
!

DESTROY.
WHOA!
KILL.
...STROY.
DESTROY.
STOP!
ZE...
DESTROY.
DESTROY.
DESTROY.

GOOD MORNING...
...

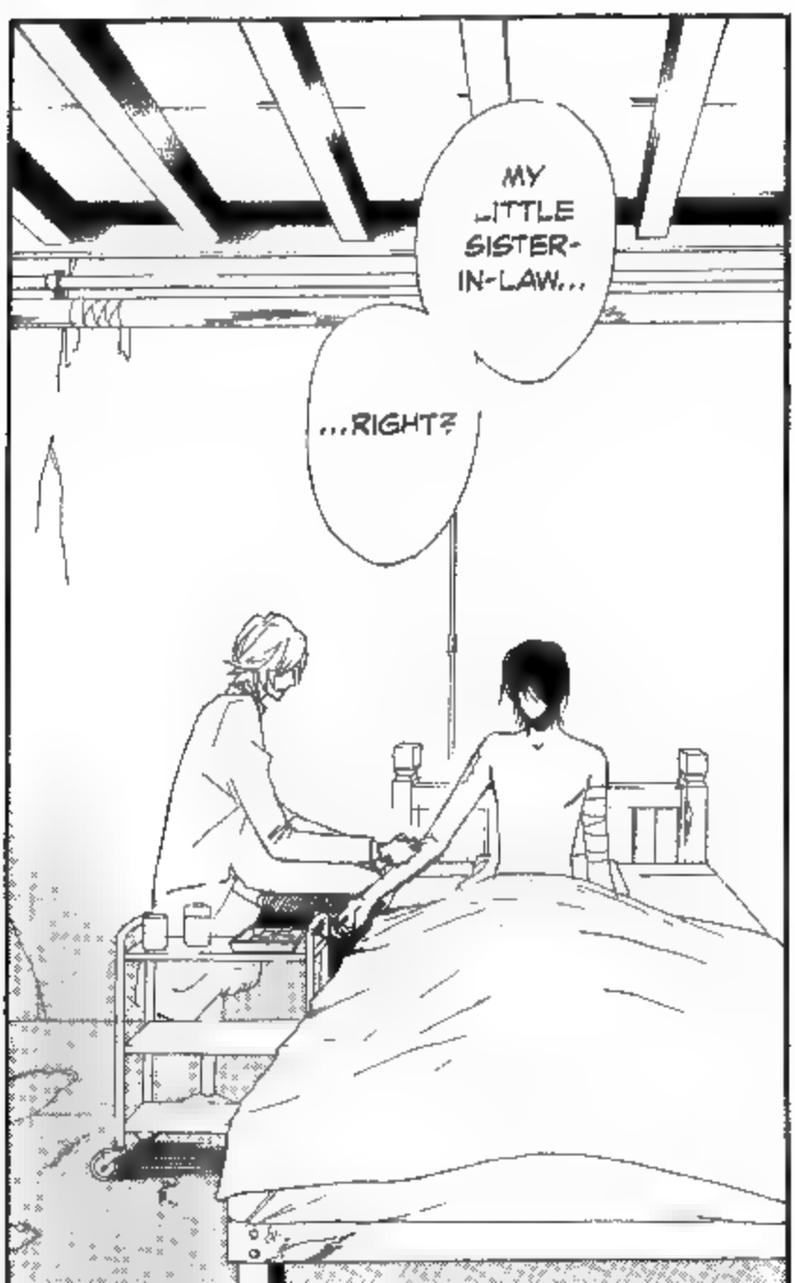
ZEN...

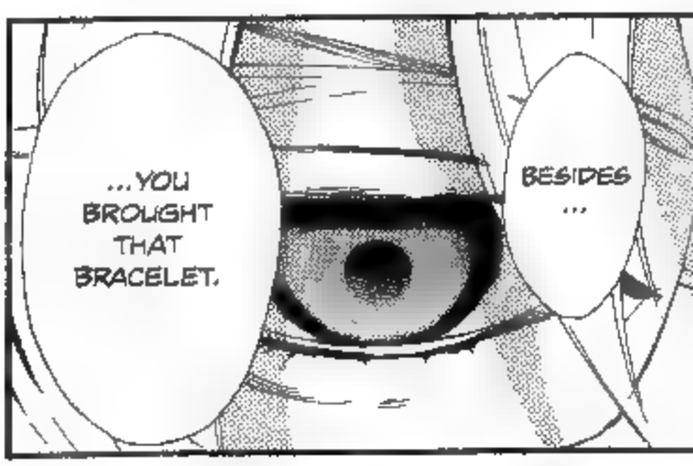
WHERE AM I?
A LITTLE LONGER... AND YOU WOULD HAVE DIED FROM BLOOD LOSS.
...W...
...WASN'T IT?

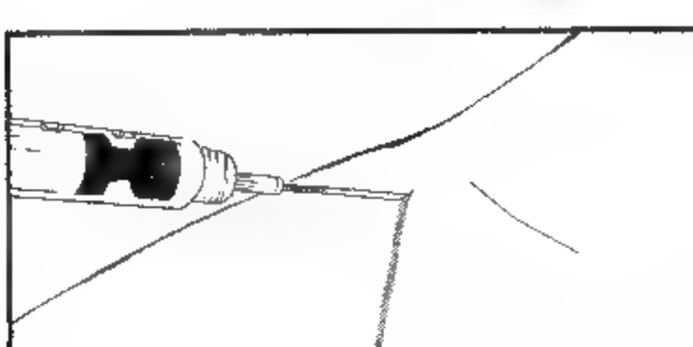

MOST OF THE SICK AND INJURED WHO COME HERE HAVE SOME SPECIAL REASON.
WHETHER CRIMINALS OR WHATEVER... TO ME THEY'RE PATIENTS I SHOULD TAKE CARE OF.

MY GUN?
IT'S SCARY WHEN YOU WAVE IT AROUND, SO I HID IT.
WE SPECIALIZE IN PATIENTS WHO CAN'T BE EXAMINED IN PUBLIC...
AN UNDER-GROUND ROOM IN A CLINIC YOU BROKE INTO.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL I REPORT YOU TO THE POLICE, SO DON'T WORRY.
...
WHEN YOU LEAVE, I'LL GIVE IT BACK.


MY LITTLE SISTER-IN-LAW...
...RIGHT?

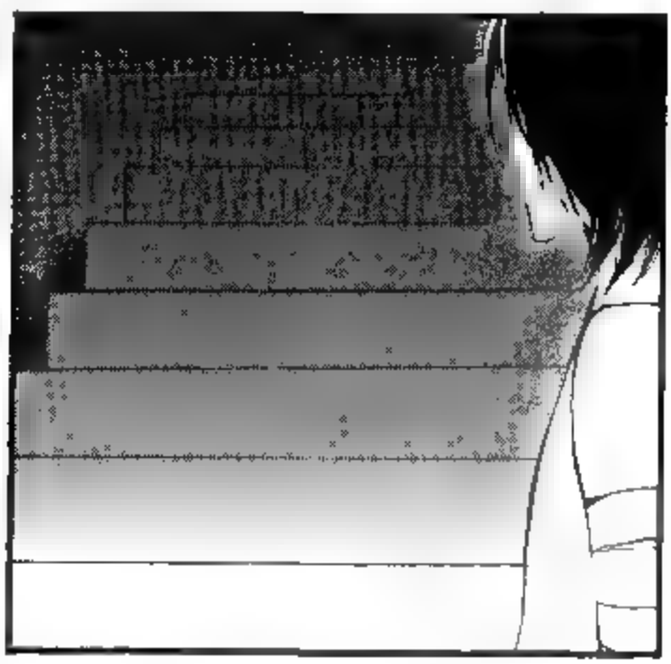

...YOU BROUGHT THAT BRACELET.
BESIDES ...

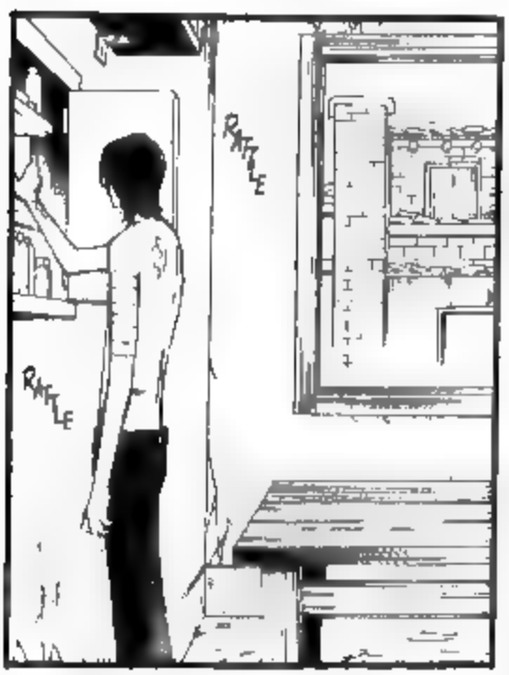


SHE'S DEAD.
IT SEEMS SHE AND HER COMRADES WERE PLANNING TO KIDNAP THE GENERAL'S DAUGHTER AND KILL HER.
I WAS INVOLVED BY CHANCE.
IT WAS AN UNLUCKY ENCOUNTER.
...
I... THOUGHT THAT MIGHT BE IT.
EVER SINCE MY LITTLE SISTER-IN-LAW... MAKA LEFT THE VILLAGE...
SHE WAS SHOT BY THE ARMY.
SHE ASKED ME TO DELIVER THAT TO YOU JUST BEFORE SHE DIED.
...I'VE BEEN...
...READY.

...RIAN, SWEET-HEART?
WOULD YOU TELL ME WHAT *REALLY* HAPPENED...
...
BUT THAT MAN...
...LOOKS TOO MUCH LIKE...
THERE WAS ONE MORE PERSON.
YOU WEREN'T KIDNAPPED...
...BY MAKA ALONE.
...ATTESTS TO SEEING A *MAN.*
THE CARE-TAKER OF THE SUMMER-HOUSE...

WAS IT HIM?
... ZEN.
HE CALLED HIMSELF...
WHY DO YOU PROTECT HIM?
WON'T YOU EVEN TELL ME, YOUR FUTURE HUSBAND?
EXCUSE ME...
MAJOR...
WE CAN'T LET A CRIMINAL WHO KIDNAPS THE GENERAL'S DAUGHTER DISAPPEAR FOR TOO LONG.
...EVEN WITHOUT YOUR TESTIMONY, WE KNOW APPROXIMATELY WHERE HE IS.
...
I SEE. WELL...
RIAN...
THAT'S WHY...
...ME.
ZEN...
... SAVED ...




RATTLE
RATTLE

KATAK

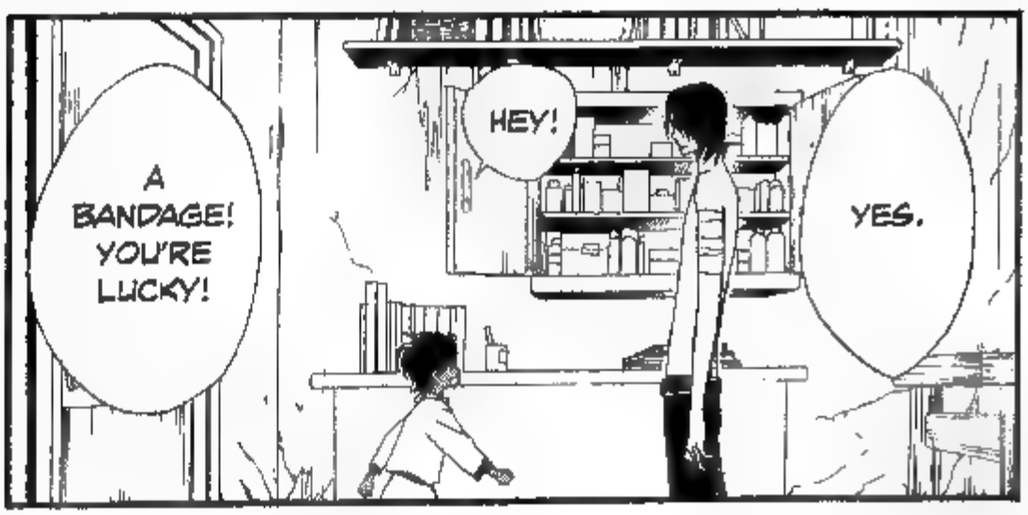
WHY CAN'T YOU TELL ME?
WHAT DID YOU DO? WHY ENDANGER OUR ENGAGE-MENT?!

IT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO ALL OF US.
DECADES MAY PASS... BUT THE CITIZENS OF AMATA WILL NEVER FORGIVE GALAY FOR KILLING THEIR PEOPLE AND TAKING AWAY THEIR COUNTRY.
HOWEVER!
MAKA DIED.
AH.
...
TWENTY YEARS AGO... GALAY INVADED AMATA TO RULE...
AFTER HER OLDER SISTER WAS KILLED IN THAT WAR... SHE HATED GALAY FIERCELY...
BUT THEY'VE MADE IT SO THAT WE CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT THAT AID!
AND ONLY AMATANS ARE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST, SO IT'S DIFFICULT TO EVEN GET A JOB.
NO!
THOSE GALAYAN BASTARDS TREAT US LIKE WE'RE NOT EVEN HUMAN!
HEY...
...BECAUSE OF AID FROM THE GALAY GOVERNMENT?
WE MAY'VE BEEN PUSHED TO THE BORDER, BUT...
...AREN'T WE ABLE TO LIVE AS WE NOW DO...

SHELTERING TERRORISTS IS ABSOLUTELY PROHIBITED.
DOCTOR...?
WE MUSTN'T DO ANYTHING TO AROUSE SUSPICION.
IF MAKA'S IDENTITY HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED, THE ARMY MIGHT THINK THAT THERE'S A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE VILLAGE AND THE TERRORIST ORGANIZATION.
CHIEF...
DON'T GET SO WORKED UP.
JUST LIKE THAT, A BUNCH OF YOUNG FOLKS LET THEIR EMOTIONS TURN TO RAGE, FLED THE VILLAGE, AND BECAME TERRORISTS.
...HOW THIS ABDUCTION DISASTER TURNED OUT?
WHO TOLD YOU...

3

My sincere apologies to all of you who read Chapter 1 and wrote me with hopes for a continuation. And sorry for the confusing story order. I'll try to make sure that nothing like this happens from now on. Of course! I'm also sorry to those of you who got ahold of *Blank Slate* for the first time as a graphic novel. All the sidebars have been filled up with excuses. .



HE DOESN'T HAVE MONEY, SO HE'S A CHEAP-SKATE.
UM... HE SAID THERE AREN'T ENOUGH MEDICAL SUPPLIES.
HE QUICKLY HIDES ALL THE IMPORTANT STUFF ON A HIGH SHELF IN A BIG JAR...

OOPS...

PLUS, HE'S A REAL COWARD.
HE'S EASILY SURPRISED AND CAN'T BE TRUSTED AT ALL...
WHO SAYS...

...I'M A COWARD?
HMM?

I'm glad he's got so much energy, but..
RATHER THAN WORRY ABOUT THAT...
THAT'S TERRIBLE:

HEY!
IT'S TRUE, ISN'T IT?

IF THEY FOUND OUT THAT I'M HIDING SOMEONE INVOLVED WITH THE TERRORISTS, WHO KNOWS WHAT THE ARMY OR POLICE MIGHT DO...
FRANKLY, I HAVEN'T TOLD THE VILLAGERS ABOUT YOU YET.

YOU...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE...?

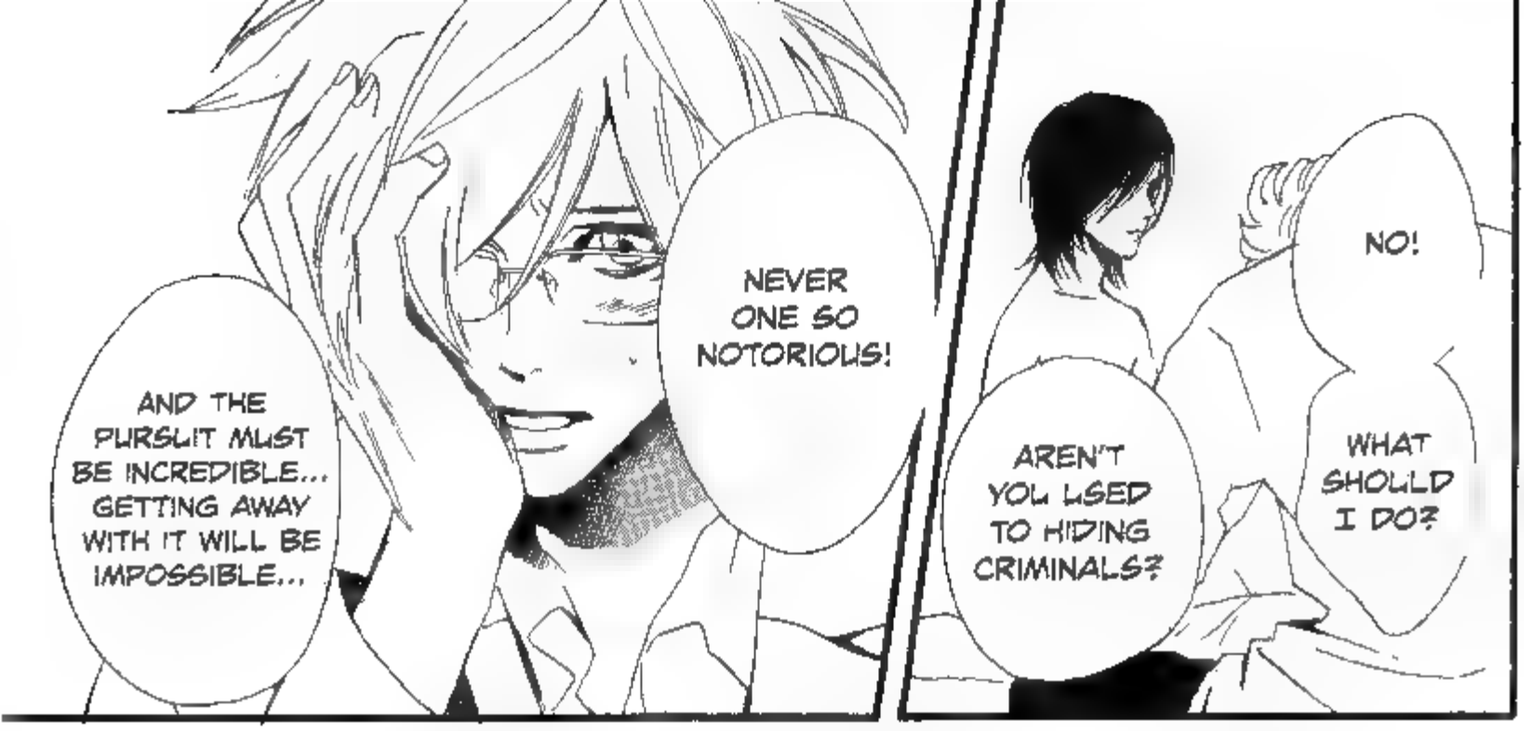
YOU STILL NEED REST!
BESIDES... UH...
So hurry on back!
IF I HAD MY GUN AND CLOTHES I'D GET OUT OF HERE RIGHT AWAY, YOU KNOW.
I DON'T WANT TO MAKE EVERYONE UNEASY... KEEP STILL AND STAY HIDDEN.

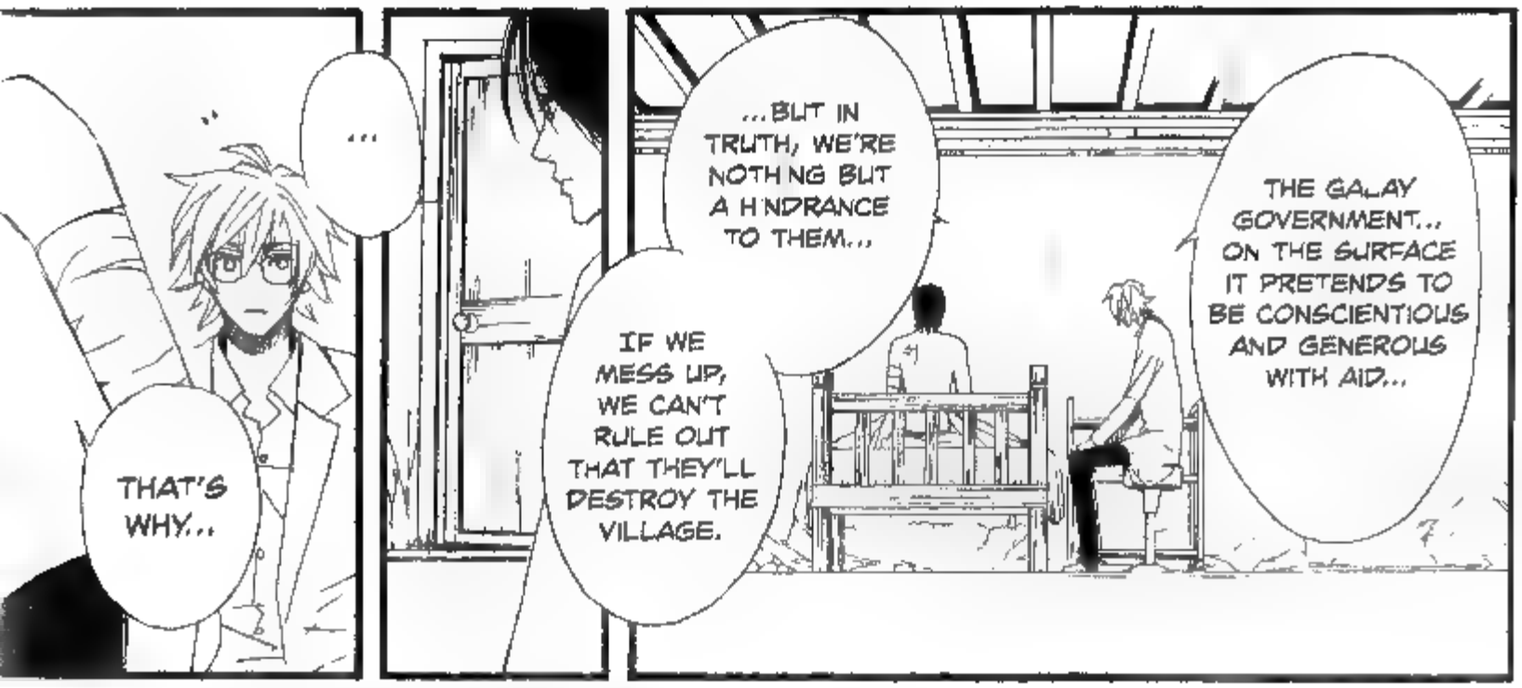
...I'M NOT A TERRORIST.
BUT I'M A PASSING...
IT'S CERTAINLY TRUE...
scan by viky

SINCE YOU'RE NOT REALLY LINKED TO THE TERRORISTS...
...THE ARMY AND POLICE PROBABLY AREN'T SO HOT ON YOUR TRAIL.

...
YOU...
...SAID YOUR NAME IS ZEN?
....WANTED CRIMINAL...
...

NO WAY...
...
YOU CAN'T BE THAT ZEN!...
...THE KIND OF INCREDIBLE VILLAIN YOU RARELY HEAR ABOUT...
...AND THE ALL-TIME WORST CRIMINAL IN HISTORY, CAN YOU?
THE ARMY AND POLICE MUST BE FEVERISHLY LOOKING FOR YOU...
THEY'VE PROBABLY ALREADY LOCATED YOU.
IF THAT ZEN WERE INVOLVED IN TERRORISM...


NEVER ONE SO NOTORIOUS!
AND THE PURSUIT MUST BE INCREDIBLE... GETTING AWAY WITH IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE...
NO!
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
AREN'T YOU USED TO HIDING CRIMINALS?


...
THAT'S WHY...
...BUT IN TRUTH, WE'RE NOTHING BUT A HINDRANCE TO THEM...
IF WE MESS UP, WE CAN'T RULE OUT THAT THEY'LL DESTROY THE VILLAGE.
THE GALAY GOVERNMENT... ON THE SURFACE IT PRETENDS TO BE CONSCIENTIOUS AND GENEROUS WITH AID...

IF YOU GIVE BACK MY GUN AND CLOTHES, THAT IS.
WHOOPS!
...I SHOULD HURRY...
...AND GET OUT OF HERE.

IS THIS GUY ZEN?
DOCTOR HAKKA...
THIS KID...
IF I JUST GIVE HIM BACK, THE WHOLE VILLAGE WILL KNOW.
WHAT SHOULD WE DO NOW?
CHILDREN ARE SLY, YOU KNOW.
EVEN IF HE OBEYS US NOW, LATER HE'LL SIDE WITH THE VILLAGERS.
!
EVERY-THING WE SAID WAS JUST A JOKE.
THIS GUY'S JUST AN INJURED PERSON.
KACHAK
UH...
WH...
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?!

PLEASE, PUT DOWN THE SCALPEL.
IF YOU HURT THAT CHILD... YOU WILL HAVE TO CONTEND WITH ME.
I FOUND IT UP ABOVE.
WHERE DID YOU GET THAT...?
...
I BET THIS REALLY CUTS, HUH?
I DO WHATEVER I WANT. IF IT GETS IN MY WAY I SMASH IT.
YOU GONNA KILL ME?
IS THAT SO?
I'M A DOCTOR.
IF I KNOW SOMEONE MIGHT DIE, I CAN'T VERY WELL THROW THEM OUT!
YOU KNEW THAT WHEN YOU PUT ME HERE.
YOU... ARE A TRUE VILLAIN...
...

AH
SO I HAVE NO REASON TO HESITATE.
IF I GIVE BACK THIS KID, I'M DOOMED, RIGHT?
THE WOUND ST.LL HASN'T CLOSED...
YOUR WOUND IS SO SERIOUS THAT IT'S A MYSTERY YOU CAN MOVE AROUND LIKE THAT.

ZEN...!!
...
REALLY...
...DON'T YOU... HAVE A CONSCIENCE ...?!

WHEN THE PEOPLE SAY IT'S EVIL...
...THEN IT BECOMES EVIL.

WOULDN'T YOU WEIGH MY LIFE AGAINST THE VILLAGE?
DO YOU HAVE ANY REASON TO EVEN HESITATE?
...?

...I DON'T WANT TO HURT ANYONE *ANYMORE.*
I...

WHO
OSH
!
...EVEN A VILLAIN LIKE YOU.
AND CERTAINLY THE PEOPLE OF THIS VILLAGE...
...DON'T WANT TO SEE ME HURT.
YOU WANT TO MAKE YOUR DESIRES HAPPEN?
YOU WANT TO REALIZE THE IMPOSSIBLE?
...EVEN SO, I...
I KNOW IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO LEAVE NO VICTIMS...
...THAT IT'S EMPTY IDEALISM... BUT...
...
YOU ARE A COWARD... JUST LIKE THE BOY SAID.
...BECOME... LIKE ME... EVIL.
...YOU NEED TO...

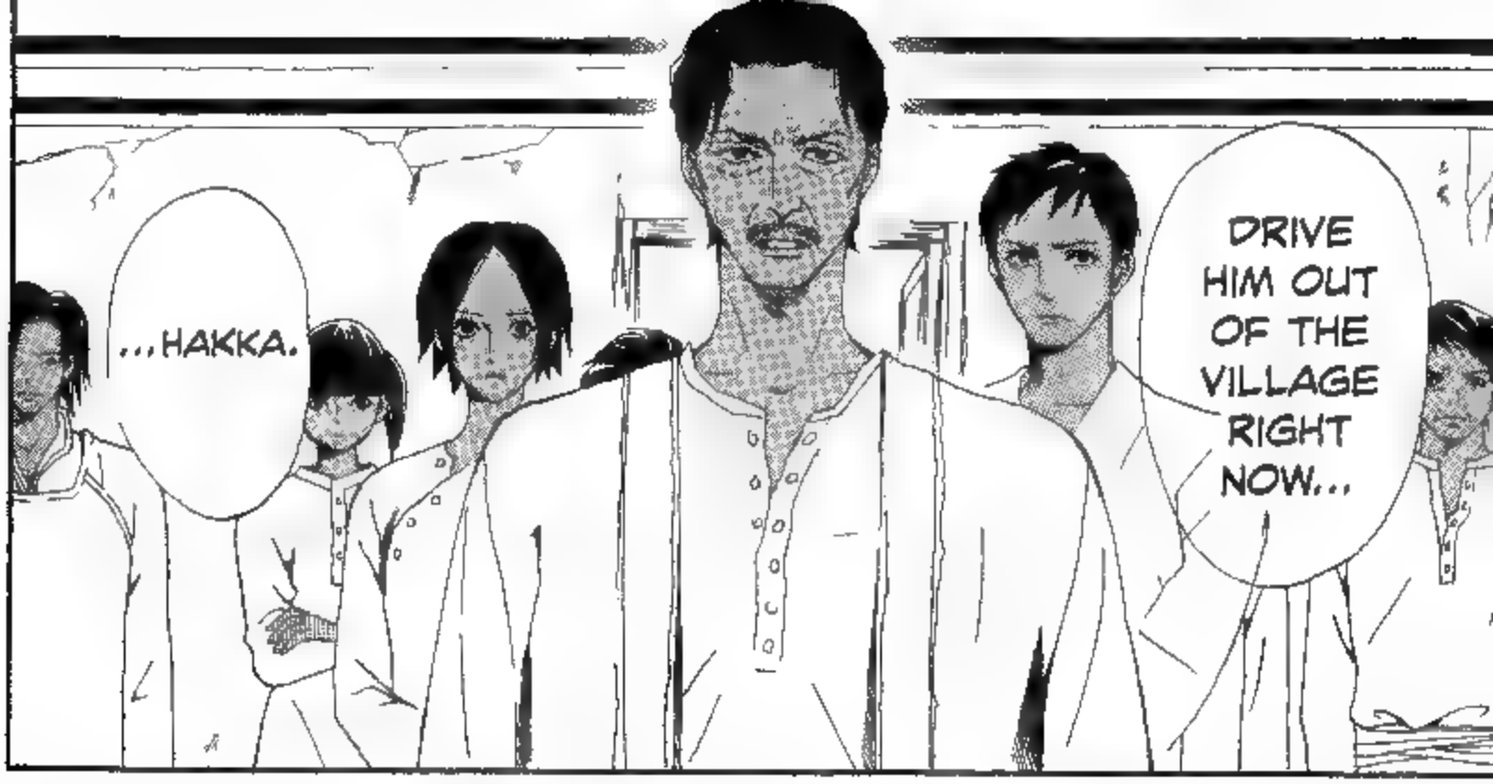
...SO I'M SURE YOU UNDERSTAND MY MEANING THEN...
...
DOCTOR
...
...YOU'RE SERVING THE PEOPLE OF THE VILLAGE...
WITH THE MONEY YOU EARN TREATING CRIMINALS, DOING THE REPREHENSIBLE...
...

OH...
HUH?
...I FIXED IT UP.
IT'S MAKA'S.
HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT IT WAS YOUR LITTLE SISTER-IN-LAW'S?
THAT BRACE-LET.
...I TOLD YOU YOU'RE STILL IN NO CONDITION TO BE UP AND MOVING AROUND.
THAT'S WHY...
...
scan by why

THIS...
IT WASN'T ORIG.NALLY MAKA'S.
IT WAS HER... OLDER SISTER'S.
HERE...
BEHIND THIS... LOOK...
IT'S BEEN ENGRAVED. HER OLDER SISTER'S NAME.
THERE'S NO WAY I COULD MISTAKE IT...
...BECAUSE I GAVE IT TO HER.
BEFORE THE WAR BEGAN...
...WHEN I TRAVELED HERE TO AMATA. INSTANTLY, I...
...MET HER... AND FELL IN LOVE.

I WAS A FOREIGNER AND BARELY KNEW MY RIGHT FROM LEFT...
...BUT SHE ACCEPTED ME.
THE PEOPLE OF THIS VILLAGE DID TOO...
WE GOT ENGAGED... SHE DIDN'T HAVE ANY PARENTS, SO TOGETHER WITH HER ONLY FAMILY-MAKA- THE THREE OF US
RAN A SMALL MEDICAL CLINIC.
WE WERE HAPPY...
..UNTIL THE WAR...
SHE DIED
..AS DID MANY OF THE VILLAGERS. A LOT OF PEOPLE DIED IN THAT WAR.
THAT'S WHY I

NEVER AGAIN...
...THAT FEELING...
...CAN... NEVER AGAIN...
SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO SACRIFICE SOMETHING IN ORDER TO PROTECT SOMETHING IMPORTANT.
...LOSE SOMEONE IMPORTANT.
THAT MAN... ISN'T WORTH PROTECTING.
SO WHAT ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT?


...HAKKA.
DRIVE HIM OUT OF THE VILLAGE RIGHT NOW...

YOU TAKE CARE OF US TOO.
THIS CHILD TOLD US EVERY-THING.
WE UNDERSTAND THAT YOU'RE WORKING SECRETLY FOR US...

CHIEF...
EVERYONE...

YOU'RE RIGHT, HE IS A CRIMINAL, BUT... RIGHT NOW HE'S AN INJURED MAN.
ARE YOU ASKING ME TO THROW OUT A GRAVELY INJURED PATIENT?
W...
WA.T A MINUTE...

IF YOU DON'T OBEY, WE MAY HAVE TO FORCIBLY...
BUT THIS TIME...
...IT'S A PROBLEM THAT AFFECTS THE LIFE OF THE VILLAGE.

I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF IT!
THAT'S NO DIFFERENT THAN THE GALAY ARMY...
GET OUT OF THE WAY, DOCTOR.
SACRIFICING SOMEONE ELSE FOR OUR OWN SAKE...
AREN'T WE ALL THE SAME?
I... LOVE THE PEOPLE OF AMATA.
...YOU ACCEPTED ME— A GALAYAN— WITHOUT RESERVATION.
BUT...
EVEN WITH THE WAR... BEFORE THEN AND ALL THE WAY UNTIL NOW...
HEY.
...SOME OTHER WAY.
THERE MUST BE...
...

IT'S BETTER TO RESOLVE THIS QUICKLY, YOU KNOW. WHILE I'M BEING GOOD.
...!
LIVING...
I'LL LEAVE...
...BUT FIRST YOU NEED TO GIVE BACK MY GUN RIGHT AWAY.
IT'S THE WORST... HAVING YOUR LIFE CONTROLLED BY SOMEONE ELSE.
...COMPLETELY UNDER SOMEONE ELSE'S PROTECTION IS A DRAG.
IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO LIVE.
I KILL AGGRESSORS. WHAT'S BEEN STOLEN, I GET BACK.
I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CONTROLS MY WORLD.

ZEN!
WAIT! I'M GOING TO-
I DON'T HAVE ANY CLOTHES.

LISTEN. I...
CAN I USE THESE? For now?
BLAM

EVERYONE PUT UP YOUR HANDS.
BEHIND YOUR HEAD AND GET ON YOUR KNEES.
HURRY!

...
...
WE FOUND THIS IN THE INCINERATOR.
IS THIS ALL THAT WAS UNDER-GROUND?
MAJOR...

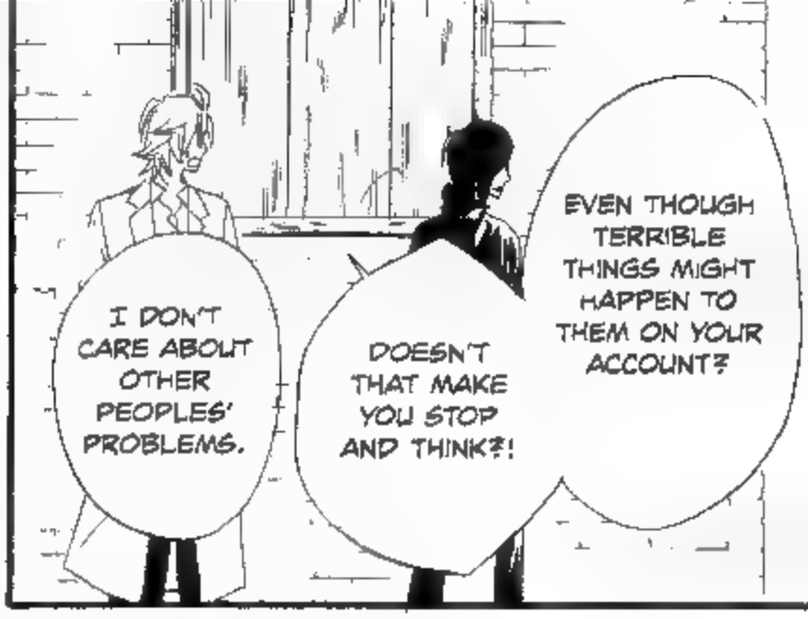
WHERE IS HE HIDING?
SPEAK.
YOU KNOW ABOUT HIM.
ZEN.
WHAM
MAMA!
DON'T PLAY DUMB!
HE WAS INVOLVED IN TERRORISM COMMITTED BY YOUR COHORTS!
THEN WHAT'S THIS?
I DON'T KNOW...
WE DON'T KNOW ANYONE BY THAT NAME.
KICK
!
THIS...
...BRAT!
WHO
WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO MY MAMA?!
OSH

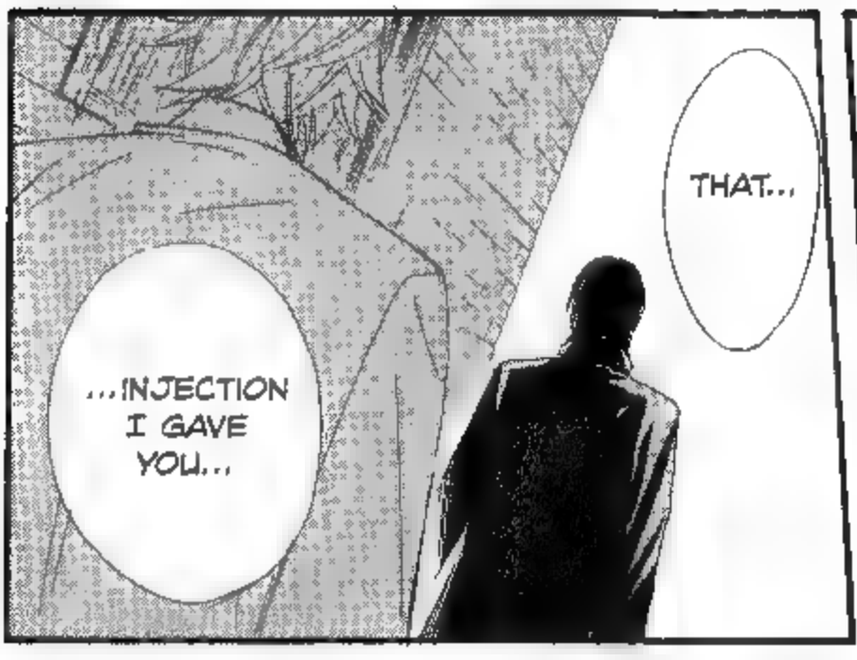
BASTARD...
THAT'S RIGHT!
GET OUT OF OUR COUNTRY!
GRAB
HEY, STOP!
I CAN'T STAND IT ANY-MORE...!
AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN...
...
WE'RE NOT SLAVES!!
KRAK
!

LIKE I THOUGHT...
...FRIENDS OF TERRORISTS.
I CAN'T LIVE ANY OTHER WAY.
I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CONTROLS MY WORLD.
...

IF THEY RESIST, I DON'T CARE IF YOU SHOOT THEM.
KA-
CHAK
ARREST THEM ALL.
DISSIDENTS.
BLAM
ZEN... ISN'T THERE SOMETHING YOU CAN DO?
IF WE DON'T HELP THEM SOON...
IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ME.
!
...

WHY DON'T YOU RUN AWAY?
IT'S A DRAG TO PIT ONESELF AGAINST THE ARMY.


I DON'T CARE ABOUT OTHER PEOPLES' PROBLEMS.
DOESN'T THAT MAKE YOU STOP AND THINK?!
EVEN THOUGH TERRIBLE THINGS MIGHT HAPPEN TO THEM ON YOUR ACCOUNT?


...INJECTION I GAVE YOU...
THAT...

ZEN...

...

IF I DON'T ADMINISTER THE VACCINE IN THE NEXT THREE DAYS...
...YOU'LL DIE.

IT WAS...
...A VIRUS.

BECOME EVIL...
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?
OF COURSE, I INTENDED TO GIVE YOU THE VACCINE LATER, BUT...
...I GAVE IT TO YOU AS INSURANCE... AGAINST YOU FURTHER ENDANGERING THE VILLAGERS.
AFTER YOU TRIED TO KILL THAT BOY...
...WHAT'S IMPORTANT.
...IN ORDER TO PROTECT...
...HUH?
AIEEE!
...LISTEN TO WHAT YOU SAY...
IF I DON'T WANT TO DIE...
ONLY I HAVE THE VACCINE...

ZEN HAS BEEN CAPTURED!
WHAT ...?
CHIEF...
ANY MORE FUTILE RESISTANCE-
MAJOR!
YOU FOO...
YOU MESSED UP...

I NEVER THOUGHT THE ARMY WOULD FIND ME SO SOON...
MY PLAN WAS TO ONCE AGAIN TRICK THE AMATANS INTO JOINING ME AND MY COMRADES...
...
SO THAT KIDNAPPING WAS THE WORK OF YOU ALONE?
...THE WAY I DID THAT WOMAN MAKA.
!
I'M NOT ALONE.
KA
CHAK
THERE ARE TWO OF US.

MY PLAN WAS TO CONVINCE EVERYONE TO REVOLT...
...AND TO USE THAT CHANCE TO ESCAPE, BUT I CHANGED MY MIND.
!!
HAKKA...
...TO KILL YOU ALL.
I'M GOING...
RIDICULOUS! JUST TWO OF YOU...?
YOU'RE GOING TO KILL ALL THESE SOLDIERS AND VILLAGERS?
IF I DO, ALL EVIDENCE WILL BE COMPLETELY WIPED OUT...
...AND IT WILL BE EASY TO ESCAPE.

YOU GUYS TOO.
FAST!
PUT YOUR HANDS UP.
K-
TAK
THROW DOWN YOUR GUN.
RIGHT NOW YOU'RE IN NO POSITION TO SAY ANYTHING TO ME.
...
DOCTOR HAKKA!
...
IF YOU WANT TO EXTEND THE MAJOR'S LIFE EVEN A LITTLE...
...IT WOULD BE SAFER NOW TO DO WHAT HE SAYS.
...RIGHT?
YOU'RE A COWARD...
THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN... KILL PEOPLE...!
DOCTOR HAKKA...
...YOU'RE JOKING, RIGHT?
IT CAN'T BE.

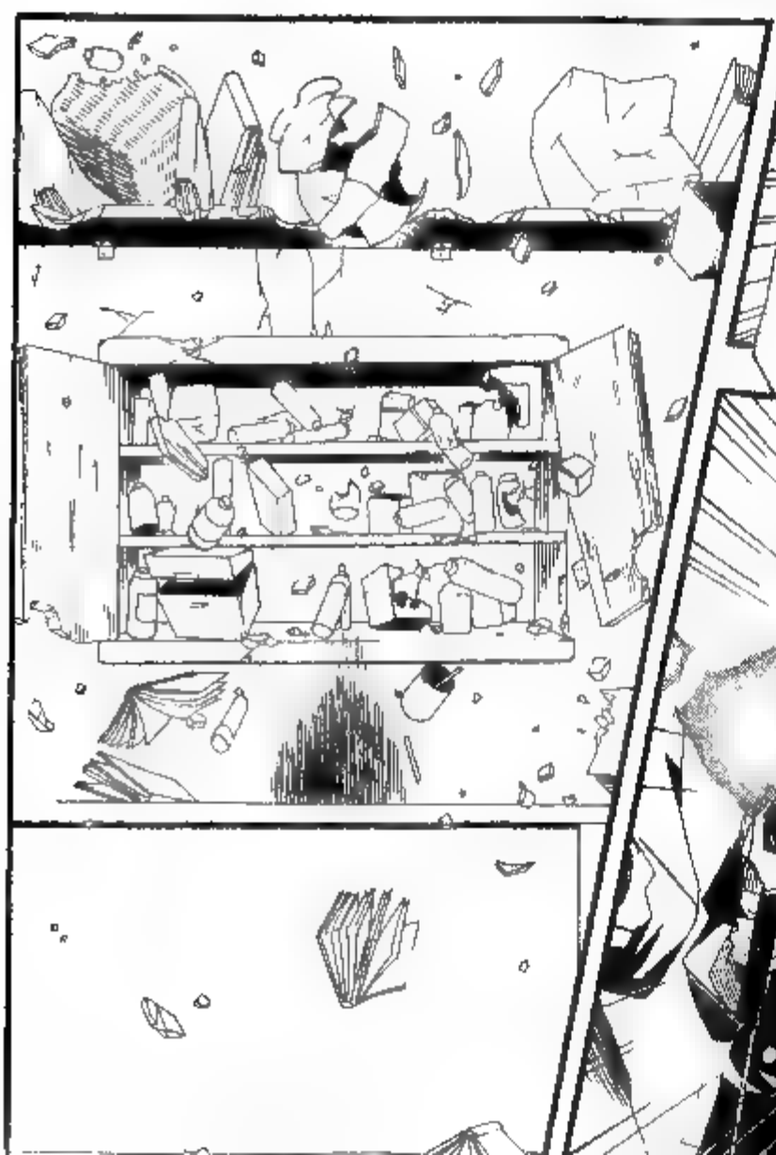
...
YOU WOULDN'T DO SOME-THING LIKE THAT, RIGHT?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO KILL THEM.
GO FOR THEIR ARMS AND LEGS.
...HAKKA.
SHOOT...
IT'S OKAY... THIS MAN WON'T SHOOT.
B-BUT, MAJOR...!
EVERYONE, DRAW YOUR WEAPONS.
YOU CAN TELL BY LOOKING IN HIS EYES... HE'S A COWARD.
HE'S NOT PREPARED TO KILL ANYONE.
...!

GEEZ...
ZEN IS UNARMED.
QUICK, GET HIM!
...
YOU DON'T SEEM WORRIED.
CAN YOU GUYS SHOOT?
OF COURSE!
I'M NOT A COWARD.
YOU'RE A USELESS PARTNER.

YOU'RE NOT COWARDS, RIGHT?
THEN SHOOT.

HE'LL GET THE DEATH PENALTY ANYWAY.
I DON'T CARE.

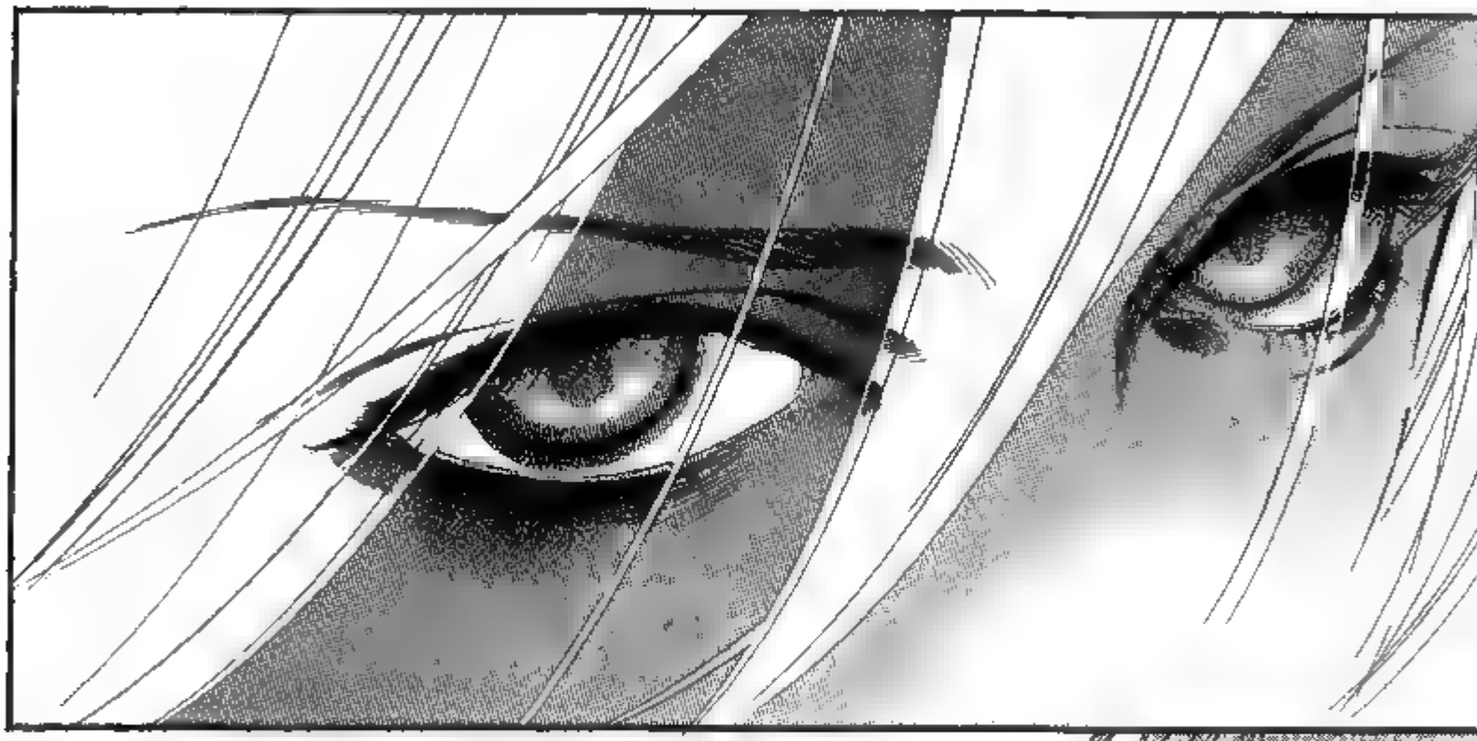
MAJOR!
DON'T GET COCKY!

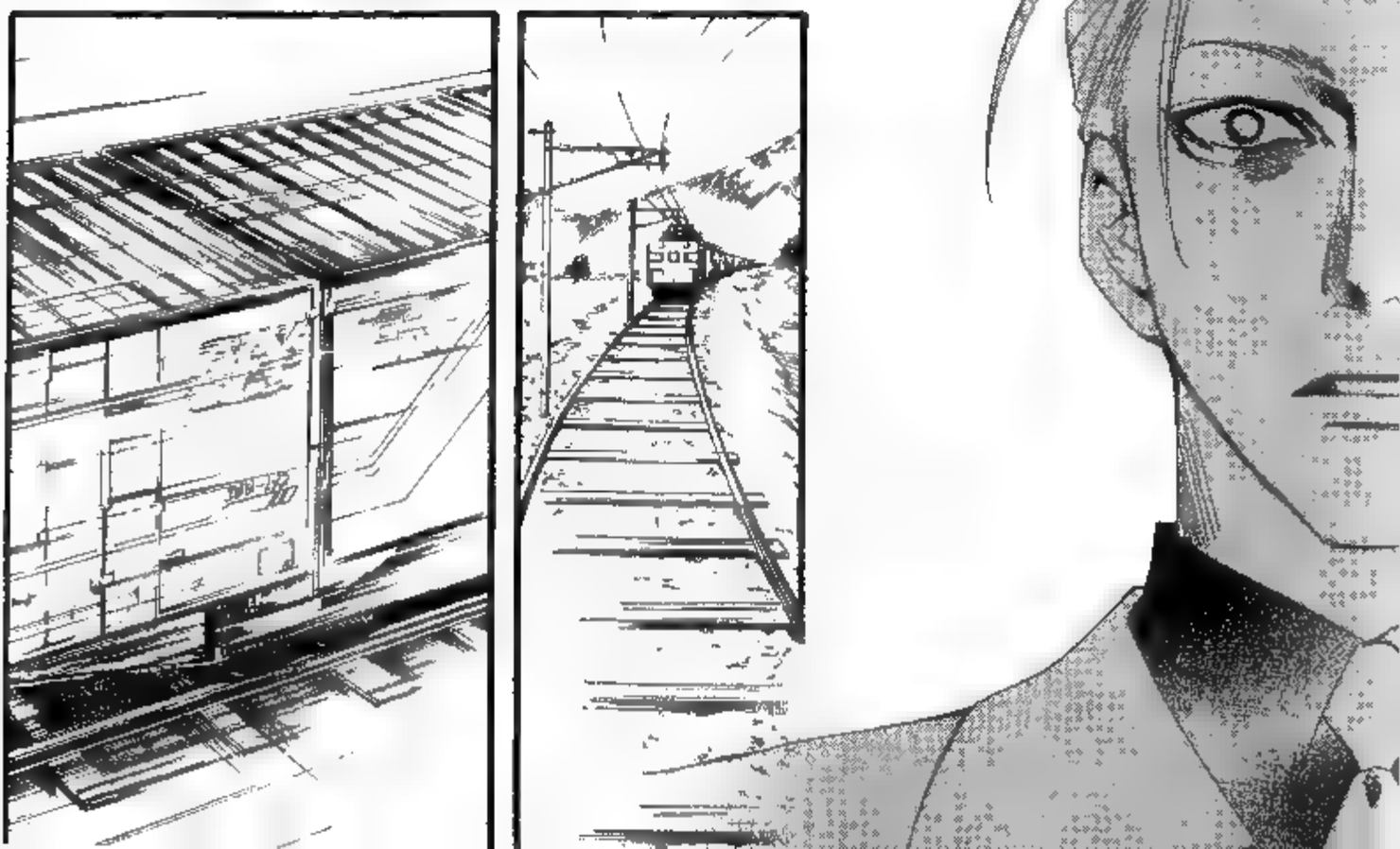


ZEN!

!!
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
AK
!

THE EYES OF SOMEONE WHO CAN KILL?
YOU CAN TELL, RIGHT?





...
THE GUN'S HIDING PLACE? I GOT A CLUE FROM THE BOY.
What would you have done if it wasn't there...?
HOW DID YOU KNOW?
BUT...
YOU'RE STILL A LONG WAY FROM EVIL, DOCTOR HAKKA.
...IT'S BEST THAT IT BE ME.
IF SOME-ONE MUST HURT...
...I CAN NEVER GO BACK TO THE VILLAGE.
...I'M FINE WITH BEING A COWARD.
WHEN IT COMES TO KILLING PEOPLE...
YEAH... IF YOU DON'T WANT TO DIE...
HURRY UP AND FIX ME.
THANKS TO YOU ALL MY WOUNDS HAVE REOPENED.
BUT THE VILLAGE CAN NO LONGER BE HELD IN SUSPICION... SO IT WENT WELL, DON'T YOU THINK?

...BECAUSE I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN HEAL YOUR WOUNDS AND CURE THE VIRUS.
...YOU'LL HAVE TO OBEY ME FROM NOW ON...
I WILL BECOME AS EVIL AS I MUST...

Blank Slate Chapter 3 / The End

第4話
Chapter Four
BLANK SLATE
悪作
アクサガ
scan by wbg

MY FIRST MEMORY IS OF DARKNESS.
A MOMENT OF AWAKENING...
I DON'T REMEMBER A THING BEFORE THAT.
ON THE RIM OF MY SWIFTLY FADING CONSCIOUS-NESS WAS ONLY...
THE SOUND OF FOOT-STEPS...
LIGHT.

DESTROY!
...ONLY CRIMINAL IMPULSES.
STEAL.
KILL.
IMPULSES THAT PENE-TRATED ME IN STRONG FLASHES OF LIGHT... THE ONLY THING KEEPING ME ALIVE.
IS THERE ANY PROOF?

IS THERE ANY PROOF THAT YOUR LITTLE SISTER-IN-LAW'S COMRADES WERE TAKEN HERE?
OF THE PEOPLE BEING HELD HERE...
HAKKA?
...WAS BUILT BY GALAY WHEN THEY INVADED AMATA...
ISTA SPECIAL PRISON...
THERE'S NO PROOF.
...IT'S THE SPECIAL QUARTERS FOR ANTI-GOVERNMENT AMATANS.
THEY CALL IT A DIFFERENT NAME...
BUT...
...THERE IS A STRONG POSSIBILITY.

I SAY... THIS IS AN HONOR!
THAT YOU WOULD COME IN PERSON FOR AN INSPECTION ...
PLEASE LOOK AROUND ALL YOU WANT.
IT SEEMS...
...YOU'RE HOLDING SOME OF THE TERRORISTS WHO WERE INVOLVED IN THE KIDNAPPING OF THE GENERAL'S DAUGHTER THE OTHER DAY.
COLONEL.
YES.
WE'RE STILL ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THE TWO WHO ESCAPED.

AN UNLICENSED DOCTOR CALLED HAKKA.
ANYWAY... IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME UNTIL WE CATCH THEM.
...
IT APPEARS THE OTHER IS A GALAYAN.
THE WORST CRIMINAL SINCE THE FOUNDING OF OUR COUNTRY...
...CALLED ZEN?
ZEN AND...
...HAKKA...

AN ESCAPEE?!
HE'S DISGUISED, BUT I THINK HE MAY BE ONE OF THE AMATANS INVOLVED IN THE KIDNAPPING INCIDENT.
DURING MY ROUNDS I DISCOVERED AN ESCAPEE, SO I BROUGHT HIM IN.
HEY...
I HAVE TO REPORT...
YOU ONLY DISCOVERED THAT ONE MAN?
THAT GANG WAS SUPPOSED TO BE IN A LEVEL FIVE SPECIAL CELL... HOW DID THEY...
WHO...
WHERE ARE YOU AFFILIATED?
IS HE AMATAN?

HIS SKIN IS...
SHUT UP AND TAKE ME IN!
WHAM
KLAK

4

Cooperation in production

Shimada-san
Kawashima-san
Rabunuma-san
Sayaka-san
Nishizawa-san
Kuwana-san
Abe-san
Tanaka-san
Kaneko-san
Yone-yan

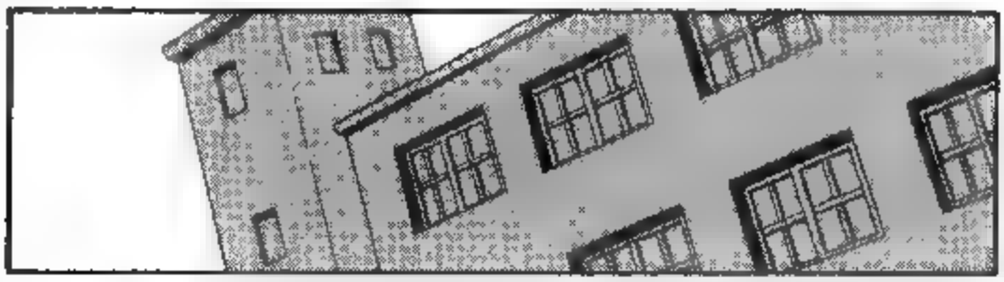
Yurino-san
Sakamoto-san
Suzuki-san

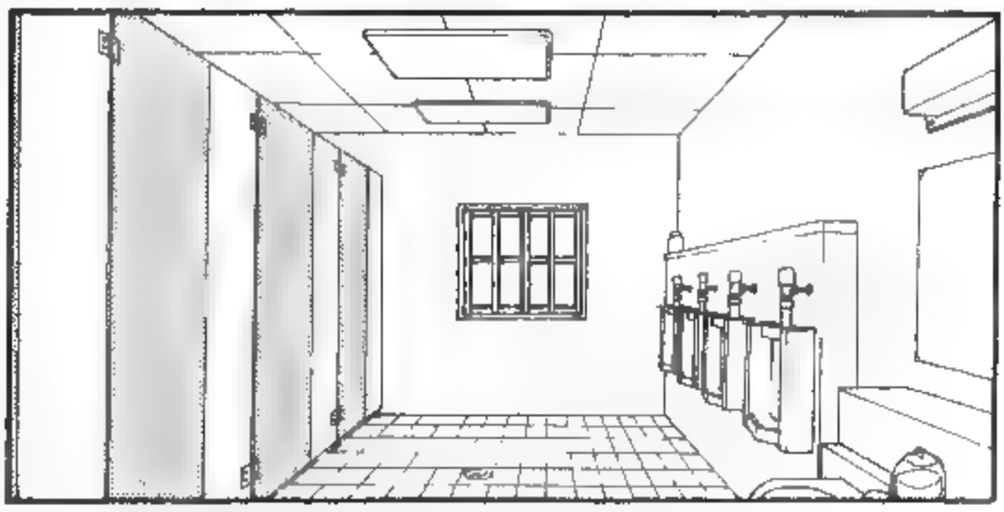
Special Thanks
Ret-san

Thank you for reading. I'll be really happy if we can meet up again in the next volume.

Your thoughts, etc.

Aya Kanno
c/o VIZ Media
P.O. Box 77010
SF, CA 94107





...I WANT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY.
...JUST THINK THAT...
...RATHER THAN SPENDING T ME FORMING A PLAN...
NOBODY WOULD HAVE THOUGHT YESTERDAY THAT TODAY YOU'D DIVE RIGHT NTO THE ENEMY'S POCKET.
THE NEWS OF OUR ARREST HAS YET TO SPREAD THROUGH THE ANTIQUATED COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS OF THE ARMY.
...
...THREE DAYS LATER I WOULD BECOME AN OUTLAW WITH HIM.
...THAT ONE OF THE WORST CRIMINALS IN HISTORY WOULD SUDDENLY APPEAR AND ...
BUT I NEVER THOUGHT...
I...
BECAUSE I'M NOT A PROFESSIONAL CRIMINAL LIKE YOU.

I BET IT'S WHAT YOU WERE HOPING FOR THOUGH.
YOU THREATENED ME.
DON'T MISUNDER-STAND.
I NEVER BELIEVED YOU ABOUT THE VIRUS.
IT WAS A VIRAL INJECTION...
IF I DON'T WANT TO DIE, LISTEN TO WHAT YOU SAY, HUH?
THAT WAS...
BUT... THEN WHY...
I THOUGHT I MIGHT BE ABLE TO SEE SOMETHING INTERESTING.
?
...
YOU KNEW...?
...FALLING INTO EVIL.
SOMEONE RIGHTEOUS...

FOR THAT...
...I DON'T MIND BEING CALLED EVIL.
LEVEL 5
IN ORDER TO PROTECT SOMETHING IMPORTANT...
WE WON'T BE ABLE TO GET PAST HERE EASILY.
THAT'S WHAT I DECIDED...
...
SO YOUR PLAN FROM THE START HAS BEEN TO DO WHATEVER SPRINGS TO MIND?
DO YOU THINK YOU CAN LEAD OUT PRISONER AFTER PRISONER WITH NOTHING BUT WEAK LIES?
I'LL FIND SOME WAY TO FOOL THE GUARD AND GET THE KEY.
WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO AFTER THAT?

AN EMERGENCY EMAIL?
EXCUSE ME!
Control room
THIS IS THE CONTROL ROOM.
IF YOU'RE GONNA DO SOMETHING... SHOW A LITTLE MORE FLAIR.
BEEP
EVERYTHING IN THE FACILITY IS REGULATED BY COMPUTER.
scan by why

WARDEN, AN EMERGENCY REPORT HAS...
WARDEN!
WHAT IS IT?

DON'T BOTHER WITH ME. CONTINUE WITH YOUR WORK.
C-COLONEL..
OH.
...
Y...
YES, SIR!

WE HAVE BEEN INFILTRATED?
WHAT?
TIED UP IN THE TOILET?
WAIT A SECOND.
A BULLETIN FOR TWO ESCAPEES HAS ARRIVED FROM HEADQUARTERS.
AS FOR A DESCRIPTION OF THE TRESPASSERS
ONE IS A TALL GALMIAN IN THE UNIFORM OF ONE OF OUR SOLDIERS
AND THE OTHER IS DRESSED IN BLACK AND HAS LONG HAIR
ZEN!
THAT'S TOO DANGEROUS..!

I'LL GO ATTACK THE CONTROL ROOM, THE REST...
...YOU CAN HANDLE HOWEVER YOU WANT.
IT MAY BE DANGEROUS, BUT IF YOU FAIL, IT'S NOTHING TO ME.
FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN... ALMOST EVERYTHING- FROM THE OPENING AND CLOSING OF THE CELLS TO THE LIGHTING SYSTEM- IS COMPUTER-CONTROLLED.
IF WE DESTROY THE COMPUTER CENTER, WE SCREW UP THE WHOLE PLACE.
ATTACKING THE CONTROL ROOM ALL ALONE...
NO...
ISN'T THAT MORE DANGEROUS FOR YOU?
DON'T FORGET.
I'M JUST CHASING DOWN DESTRUCTION.
I'M NOT DOING ANYTHING FOR YOU.
WHAT DID YOU COME HERE FOR?

...THESE URGES I HAVE.
I'M JUST FOLLOWING...
I AM FREE IN EVERY-THING.
I'M JUST ...
IT'S NOT FOR ME.
I BET YOU'RE...
...
...BOUND BY THOSE URGES.
THE COMPLETELY FREE HUMAN BEING...
...DOESN'T EXIST.

...NO SUCH THING.

...THEY'VE BEEN INSIDE ME.

EVER SINCE THE MOMENT I BECAME CONSCIOUS...

THERE'S...

...AND WE'LL MEET AGAIN.
KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE...
WE'LL MEET AGAIN.

KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE, AND WE'LL MEET AGAIN.

YES, SIR!
WE STILL HAVEN'T CONFIRMED THAT IT IS INDEED ZEN.
...
I'M SORRY, SIR, BUT PLEASE WAIT HERE.
YOU JUST DO YOUR JOB.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.
DON'T DO ANYTHING UNNECESSARY.
THE COLONEL HAS NEVER NEEDED ANYONE TO GUARD HIM.
YOU'RE YOUNG, SO MAYBE YOU DON'T KNOW THIS.
WARDEN ...
AS A PRECAUTION, SHOULD I HAVE A FEW MEN GO TO GUARD THE COLONEL?

WARDEN...
HIS FEATS ARE TALKED ABOUT EVEN NOW...
THE COLONEL...
...IS THE HERO THAT LED THE INCREDIBLE ATTACK IN THE SECOND BORDER DISPUTE WITH THE DARAL FEDERATION.
HE SINGLE-HANDEDLY WIPED OUT AN ENTIRE SQUADRON OF THE DARAL AIRBORNE DIVISION, WHICH WAS THE BEST IN THE WORLD.
HUH?

W...
WARDEN...
KAKONG

scan by why

CALM DOWN.
ANY MINUTE NOW THE EMERGENCY LIGHTING WILL-
DON'T SHOOT!
KL
K
K
K
K
K
K
K
K
K
K
K

T A K K
WHAT HAPPENED?
HUBBUB
WHAT HAPPENED?
CONTROL ROOM... RESPOND!
IT SEEMS THE MAIN COMPUTER HAS GONE CRAZY!
THE CELLS HAVE ALL BEEN UNLOCKED!
WHAT...?!
DA-
DUM
THE PRISONERS...!
WHOA!

A FRIEND?
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
EVEN WITH ALL THIS CHAOS WE MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO ESCAPE, BUT...
!
...
WAIT!
IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK!
I'M...
...MAKA'S BROTHER-IN-LAW.
TRUST ME.
STICK WITH ME.
ONLY...

MMP
SL U
PCH
PCH
...
INTERESTING.
SO THIS IS THE POWER OF ZEN.
YOU ARE DEMONIC.

YOU COULD BE AN EXCELLENT SOLDIER.
DARING AND COLD-BLOODED.
SUCH HIGH COMBAT STRENGTH.
...TOO BAD.
IT'S REALLY...

BL
AM
!
HNo OM

AM
NH
AM
WH
ARE YOU
EVEN
HUMAN?

HO
HO
THUNK
scan by why

THOSE EYES...
WHACK

LONG AGO ...
I ONCE FOUGHT SOMEONE...
...WHO WAS NO LONGER HUMAN.

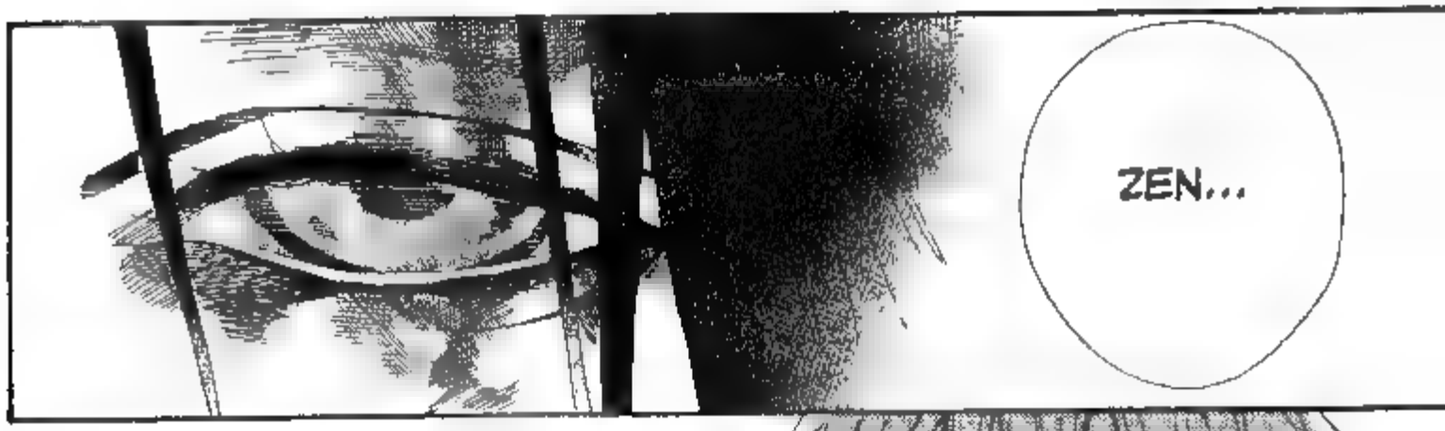
HE HAD...
...YOUR EYES.

YOU...
...
WHY?
YOU...
IT CAN'T BE...!
SPZ
ZT

KA-BOOM!!!!!
ZEN...!

WHOOMP
KRRAY
DESTROY!
KILL!

KILL!
KILL!
KILL!
KILL!
KILL!
KILL HIM!

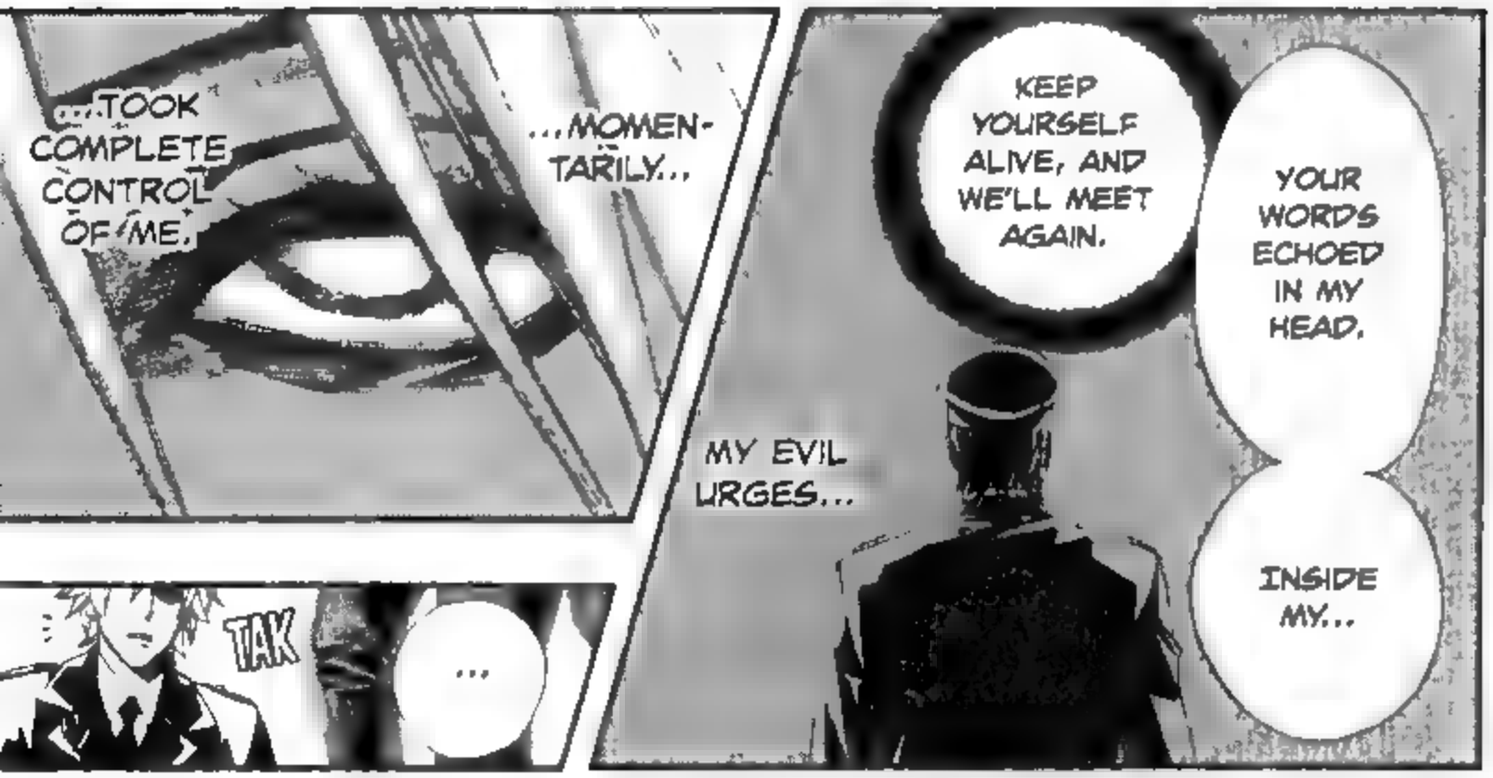

ZEN...

YOU IN THERE?

...
GOOD!
BECAUSE I CAN'T CARRY YOU OUT OF HERE.
WHAT HAPPENED?
BEFORE THAT.
WHEN I FOUND YOU I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU'D...
THE CONTROL ROOM'S COMPUTER EXPLODED...
PART OF THE BUILDING COLLAPSED.
scan by why
SINCE BEFORE I LEFT FOR THE CONTROL ROOM...
SINCE I LEFT YOU... HOW MANY MINUTES HAVE PASSED?
HUH?

I SEE...
...
AT LEAST 30 MINUTES...
I DON'T REMEMBER.
ALL THAT TIME...
...
YOU... MUST BE IN SHOCK FROM THE EXPLOSION ...
NO.
I DON'T REMEMBER.

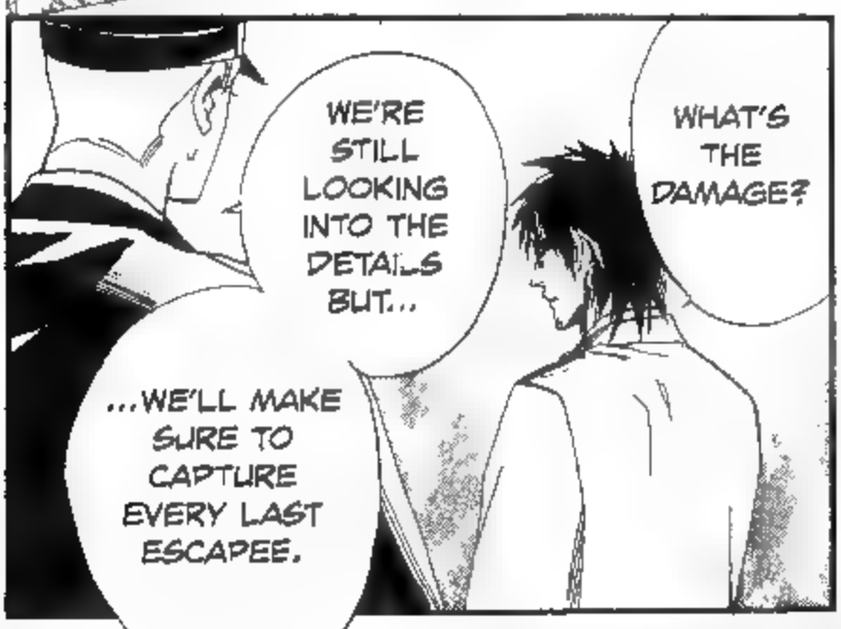
IT WAS RIGHT AFTER I LEFT YOU.
I LOST CONSCIOUS-NESS.


...TOOK COMPLETE CONTROL OF ME.
...MOMEN-TARILY...
KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE, AND WE'LL MEET AGAIN.
YOUR WORDS ECHOED IN MY HEAD.
MY EVIL URGES...
INSIDE MY...
TAK
...

...
I'M STANDING, SO I GUESS MY LEG ISN'T BROKEN.
MY BRAIN DOESN'T REGISTER PAIN.
CAN YOU STAND UP SO SOON?
CLEARLY, YOU'RE AN OVER-ACHIEVER...

ARE YOU REALLY...
...HUMAN?
ARE YOU... EVEN HUMAN?
B-D-M-P
YOUR EYES...
IT CAN'T BE...!
WHAT...
...IS CONTROLLING ME?
YOU...
ZEN?
...
WHAT...

COLONEL!


WE'RE STILL LOOKING INTO THE DETAILS BUT...
WHAT'S THE DAMAGE?
...WE'LL MAKE SURE TO CAPTURE EVERY LAST ESCAPEE.

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE INTRUDERS?

IT WASN'T ENOUGH TO KILL HIM.
SO THEY GOT AWAY...
.WE'RE CURRENTLY PUTTING ALL OUR EFFORTS INTO A FULL INVESTIGATION.
UH.
ABOUT THAT. .
HOW-EVER.
THAT MAN...
THERE'S NO WAY I CAN LET YOU GO LIKE THIS...
I CAN'T LET YOU GO FREE...

HM?

RATTLE

RATTLE

RATTLE

RATTLE

...

AN INSPECTION?

STOP. STOP.

I'M GONNA CHECK INSIDE.

AIM

WH

IS THERE SOME KIND OF PROBLEM?
JUST TO BE SURE, I'M GOING TO CHECK WITH HEAD-QUARTERS.
IT SEEMS SOME OF THE ESCAPEES ARE DRESSED AS SOLDIERS.
...
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
WE CAUGHT SOME ESCAPEES, SO WE'RE JUST TAKING THEM IN.
YOU NEED TO GET OUT NOW.

I'M GONNA HAVE THOSE TWO COME WITH US FOR NOW...
...BECAUSE THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN LET THE ARMY KNOW OUR WHEREABOUTS YET.
BUT TOO MANY PEOPLE COULD BE BAD.
NOW IF THEY WERE *DEAD*...
...
SHOULD WE...
...DON'T ENGAGE THE SOLDIERS. AFTER FLEEING AS FAR AS POSSIBLE...
I DON'T KNOW.
...TRUST THEM...?
...BUT THEY HELPED US ESCAPE.
LET THEM CATCH YOU. I WON'T FAIL YOU. TRUST ME.

SO?
WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO NOW?
WHICHEVER ROAD WE TAKE... BACK THERE WE WERE JUST WAITING TO BE EXECUTED...
...
I'M...
...
...I'LL TAKE MY CHANCES ON EVEN THE SMALLEST POSSIBILITY.
HUH?
...I WANT YOU TO STAY WITH ME FOR A WHILE.
IN RETURN...
...GONNA LET THEM GO.

I'M...
...GONNA GET TO THE BOTTOM...
...OF WHAT'S INSIDE ME.
IF THOSE URGES...
YOUR WORDS SET ME OFF...
...AND MY BEING HAVE A REASON...
...IT MEANS YOU YOURSELF ARE A CLUE...
I'M NOT REALLY INTERESTED IN MY PAST, BUT...
...BEING CONTROLLED...
...EVEN FOR A SECOND...
I WON'T STAND FOR IT.

Blank Slate Chapter 4 / The End

scan by why